Hafa Adai!

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FBI searches building's 2nd floor

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

A police officer watches the side entrance to the second floor of the two-story Kase II Building in Garapan, where Federal Bureau of Investigation agents searched yesterday the entire second floor. The FBI has yet comment about the investigation.

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Special agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation searched the second floor of a two-story building in Garapan yesterday.

Saipan Tribune learned that Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) leases the space for its construction department.

As of press time, *Saipan Tribune* had yet to receive comments from the FBI and Imperial Pacific about the investigation.

At about 8am yesterday, about four FBI special agents accompanied by a U.S. Marshal were seen on the second floor of Kase II Building across T Galleria. Two police officers were

See FBI on Page 4

House committee seeks answers

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

The House Public Utilities and Communications Committee has summoned officials of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. to a meeting in order to shed light on some of the issues plaguing the agency.

See HOUSE on Page 4

'What a tangled web we weave'

By ERWIN ENCINARES
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REPORTER

A tangled web of crisscrossing and interwoven connections—as suggested by documents obtained by *Saipan Tribune*—imply a wide-ranging case of conflicts in the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s emergency procurement of an engine.

At the same time, there is a sense of circling the wagons, with CUC officials and board members citing rules and regulations to cloak their actions, belying claims of transparency and openness.

An examination of the articles of incorporation of General Pacific Services Marianas Inc., the engine's contractor, shows that CUC

See WHAT on Page 4

Kin of murdered guard cry for justice

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The family and relatives of a poker arcade security guard who was killed in Dandan two weeks ago are demanding justice for the victim.

The 46-year-old sister of Jim Nimwes, 47, a Chuuk national, stated in an interview yesterday that they want to know who the killer is and expect to see justice for her brother.

» **Sister says victim denied falling from a tree**

"I really miss him a lot," she said, her voice tembling. "He was a very good guy, friendly and not a troublemaker.

See KIN on Page 4

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A 14-year-old girl holds the hand of her then-dying uncle, Jim Nimwes, at the Commonwealth Health Center. Nimwes, a poker security guard, was found with massive injuries lying on the ground in Dandan last March 16. The following night, he died. Police classified the case as a homicide.

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Britain files for divorce from the European Union.
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IT&E

Local

NMI's junior thespians invited to Int'l Festival

Amy Solomon, left, and Bonnie Gio Sagana show off their superior ranking medals after returning from the 2017 Junior Thespian

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By YUUKI NISHIDA
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STUDENT REPORTER

Having just returned from a successful trip, the CNMI's junior thespians may soon leave the islands again after being invited to perform at the International Thespian Festival

Continued on Next Page

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The six middle school students that represented the CNMI at the Junior Thespian Festival are, from left, Amy Solomon (monologue), Frances Pliscou (duet musical), Juliet Inocencio (duet acting), Amber Liwag (duet musical), Bonnie Gio Sagana (solo musical), and Jonathan Wolf (duet acting).

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

2017 in Lincoln, Nebraska.

The Feb. 10-12 debut of the Junior Thespian Festival featured the participation of 35 groups, for a total of 1,429 students.

Northern Marianas International School's Amy Solomon, Hopwood Middle School's Bonnie Gio Sagana, and Dandan Middle School's Juliet Inocencio and Jonathan Wolf all received a superior rating, the highest recognition in the Junior Thespian Festival.

Students who received a superior rating are eligible to perform at the International Thespian Festival in Nebraska.

Solomon, who represented the CNMI for monologue, said, "It has really been an honor to be a part of this group [and to be able to represent the CNMI]." She enjoyed participating in workshops and watching all of the shows.

Sagana, a Thespian veteran, represented the CNMI in solo musical. He felt more confident this year in his performance and learned from the previous year. He received a superior rating and was invited to perform on a main stage performance for the closing of the festival. He also received an All-Star award.

Inocencio represented the CNMI in duet acting. "My favorite part about the festival was getting to watch all these amazing people perform for us. I also loved going to the workshops, it was awesome learning techniques on acting, singing, and dancing," Inocencio said. She also received a superior rating and was invited to perform her duet acting piece on the main stage.

The team was invited to perform a 15-minute main stage performance of *Into the Woods*. In addition, the troupe got into the top six outstanding performances.

The Junior Thespian Festival and Junior Theater Festival West will be holding the same festival next year in February. The International Thespian Festival will be held this June.

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WHAT

From Page 1

board member Albert Taitano is GPSM's registered agent for the service of legal processes.

Rep. Ed Propst (Ind-Saipan) attempted to confirm this with CUC deputy executive director William Gilmore. "I asked Gilmore in an interview if any of the members of the board had a conflict of interest with this company," Propst said. Gilmore reportedly said there was none.

"According to Gilmore, [Taitano] was [involved with negotiations] all throughout the process," said Propst, "…[but] you have to disclose this [conflict] by law."

When *Saipan Tribune* asked Gilmore about Taitano's role in the contract, Gilmore said, "His role was to say yes or no to the motion that was made."

"Taitano decided to recuse himself [during the vote]," added Gilmore, even mentioning that Taitano did not have anything to do with the formulation of the contract.

Not so fast, said Propst. "Even if Taitano claims he didn't vote on it, that is besides the point," he said in a separate interview, saying that the bigger question is why Taitano and GPSM president Amelia Toelkes failed to disclose their business relationship.

According to Gilmore, Taitano failed to disclose to the CUC board members why he recused himself from the vote. "I have no idea why," he said.

Gilmore regularly attends CUC board meetings, including the board's executive sessions.

Saipan Tribune tried to ask Taitano yesterday about his relationship with GPSM and Toelkes but he did not respond as of press time.

"With the conflict of interest, this contract must be declared null and void. It should not proceed forward and it should not take an injunction to stop this contract. Why didn't the president of GPSM reveal this information?" asked Propst.

The CUC board had voted to procure an 8- to 10-megawatt diesel engine from GPSM.

The Public Utilities Commission, which has regulatory authority over CUC, has been silent about the issue so far. It's a three-member body that is currently down to one member, David Guerrero, as the governor has yet to assign two new members.

Relationships

Another relationship involved in the emergency procurement that is also raising some eyebrows is that of CUC board chair Adelina Roberto and a certain Philip Roberto, said to be GPSM's vice president.

Adelina Roberto was one of three CUC members who voted to proceed with the procurement of the engine from GPSM.

It was only after voting to push through with the engine's procurement and two House lawmakers raising a howl of protest that the board agreed to produce a negotiating committee that is supposed to negotiate the engine's purchase from GPSM.

CUC board member Eric San Nicolas proposed the negotiating committee, supposedly to speed things up. The committee would be headed by Adelina Roberto.

When asked about Adelina Roberto and Philip Roberto's relationship, Gilmore said, "I believe that is a new name for me," referring to Philip.

Saipan Tribune also asked Adelina Roberto about this but, like Taitano, she has yet to respond as of press time.

Why so secretive?

Saipan Tribune learned that CUC came up with a selection committee headed by Gilmore to handle the selection of the request for quotations, or RFQ. Gilmore said the nominees for selection of the RFQ was based on previously cancelled requests for proposals, or RFP, giving CUC the liberty to decide on who gets the deal.

"As a responder to one of two prior RFP's that we issued and were cancelled, we used those as our sources for getting immediate quotes," said Gilmore. "There were four total and we called them all."

When asked about the members of the selection committee, Gilmore consulted first with CUC legal counsel James Sirok, asking whether he was allowed to disclose the names of the members.

Sirok reportedly did not authorize Gilmore to identify the committee members, deeming the names to be "unnecessary" information.

"The selection committee operates privately. They do their deliberations, they pull their information together and they make their recommendation, which is fair and just. They all signed off on the final recommendations to the board, that was it," added Gilmore.

Prior to consulting Sirok, Gilmore stated that the committee is composed of two representatives from the power division, a CUC contract manager, CUC chief financial officer Antonio Castro, and Gilmore himself acting as chair.

Propst attended Wednesday's special CUC board meeting, only to be greeted by questions about his presence at the meeting.

Wednesday's discussion on the financial aspect of procuring the engine was done through an executive session. Despite discussing the financing behind closed doors, San Nicolas told reporters yesterday that the process was "open and transparent, contrary to what Mr. Propst said."

HOUSE

From Page 1

Committee chair Francisco S. Dela Cruz (R-Saipan) said he has invited CUC board chair Adelina C. Roberto, executive director Gary Camacho, chief financial officer Antonio Castro, the engine selection committee, and the water and procurement division managers.

The meeting was originally set for April 6, Thursday, at 1:30pm at the House chamber. Dela Cruz, however, said that Roberto asked to move it to the following week, on April 11.

"I have already sent out a letter to CUC and asked to meet with them. Unfortunately, some of the board members and the executive director are off island. Ms. Roberto has requested to reschedule the meeting, to which I have granted," added Dela Cruz.

CUC board vice chair Eric C. San Nicolas, secretary Albert A. Taitano, treasurer Joseph T. Torres, and members David J. Sabla and Ignacio I. Perez are also part of the CUC board.

The CUC board and executive director have been in the spotlight this week regarding a deal with General Pacific Services Marianas Inc., through president Amelia R. Toelkes, for the purchase of a power engine.

Amelia R. Toelkes is the wife of Robert Toelkes, whose company, International Bridge Corp., filed for bankruptcy last year and failed to finish its project at JFK High School in Guam.

Robert Toelkes is also a consultant in the *M/V Luta* project and is a defendant in the case filed by Japanese investor Takahisa Yamamoto.

IBC, according to *Pacific Daily News*, owes the IRS $9.2 million in taxes and another $4.8 million in business taxes to the government of Guam.

Dela Cruz said his committee just wants CUC to clarify some issues. "The committee does not hope for CUC to explain the whole issue behind the plan to sole-source but rather to have them explain outright how they arrived at their decision."

"Again… we would ask them questions and hopefully they would answer."

He also believe that a CUC board member also represents GPSM. "I also believe that a certain member of the CUC board may be a representative to Mrs. Toelkes' corporation. I will divulge and clarify this information during my meeting with CUC on April 11."

Albert Taitano, in GPSM's articles of incorporation obtained by *Saipan Tribune,* is listed as an agent for the corporation.

Rep. Blas Jonathan T. Attao (Ind-Saipan), a member of the minority, is part of the House PUC committee, along with Rep. Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero (Ind-Saipan).

Attao chose to withhold his comment when asked by *Saipan Tribune*. "At this time, I am just reading what is going on so I would rather not comment right now because I have not digested the information to formulate my concerns just yet."

Reps. Francisco C. Aguon (R-Saipan), Edwin P. Aldan (R-Tinian), Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero (R-Saipan), and Jose I. Itibus (R-Saipan) are the other members of the House PUC Committee. Aguon is also the committee's vice chair.

Where's CPUC?

Minority leader Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) and Rep. Edwin K. Propst (Ind-Saipan) also questioned why the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission has not stepped in since they would have scrutinized the contract for the emergency purchase of the power engine.

CPUC is the body that regulates the rates of all utilities—telecommunications, power, and water. Dave Guerrero is CPUC's sole commissioner and the office has indefinitely closed since November 2016.

"CPUC may approve or disapprove rates. There were times that there's only one member and I can't believe it. This is not a small board, this is a big deal and we need to have that board," said Villagomez.

Propst added that he's not sure why Gov. Ralph DLG Torres has not appointed new members of the CPUC board. "[The closure in 2016] is all the more reason for Gov. Torres to reestablish CPUC. And I think they zeroed out their budget."

"[Some] members were not renewed, that's why it is defunct now. [CPUC] is supposed to review the contract."

KIN

From Page 1

Jim Nimwes

Nimwes was not only her brother; he felt more like a father.

"I have 10 children. Every day we depended on him. He was supporting us. He was really helping us," said the sister, who stays in San Jose.

Nimwes, who was single, raised his 2-year-old nephew since the child was only a month old at their small house in Dandan. His sister, two cousins and a nephew are staying in the Dandan house. Nimwes has a separate house just next to the family's house.

The sister recalled that in the morning of April 16, the Korean employer of Nimwes came to the family's house and told them that Nimwes fell from a tree.

She said when her other sister arrived at the scene, Nimwes was lying on the ground under the tree next to JL Poker, where he worked as a security guard for over four years already.

Later, police and an ambulance arrived.

JL Poker is located on the ground floor of a two-story building along Dandan Road. A wall/fence separates the building from an abandoned house. The tree is behind the fence beside the house.

The sister said she talked to Nimwes at the Commonwealth Health Center that morning of March 16 and even the following day.

She said they could not believe that he fell because of the massive injuries to his head and back; his legs were paralyzed too. She asked him if he indeed fell from the tree and she said her brother managed to reply "no."

The sister said her brother, who was in pain, found it difficult to talk as his neck was swollen.

She said she asked repeatedly who attacked him and her brother would reply, "Later." The sister said what her brother meant was he could tell later once his condition improves as he was in pain.

"But it's too late. On Friday [March 17] night he died," she said.

Nimwes moved to Saipan from Guam in 2003. He stayed at his parents' house in Dandan. His parents have already passed away. He has 10 siblings, including one in Chuuk and two in Guam. Before he became a security guard, he was a fisherman.

The family is planning to bury him at the Tanapag cemetery this Monday at 10am.

Jesmy Nakayama, 51, said they want to know who killed her cousin.

"I want justice for my cousin," said Nakayama, who used to be neighbor of Nimwes back in Chuuk.

Nakayama and her 22-year-old son, YJ Nakayama, last saw Nimwes alive at the Roundhouse in Garapan last March 7 for the election of the Chuuk governor.

"He's a nice, funny guy," she said.

Nimwes was found with massive injuries last March 16 in the morning south of JL Poker along Dandan Road. The following night, March 17, a doctor at the Commonwealth Health Center pronounced him dead.

Last March 24, Guam chief medical examiner Dr. Aurelio Espinola conducted an autopsy and determined that guard died due to blunt force trauma. Police classified the death as a homicide.

FBI

From Page 1

also seen in front of the building and another in the building's back entrance.

Yellow tape was placed at the bottom of the escalator located next to ABC Store, blocking access to the second floor of the building. Yellow tapes were also put on the building's side entrance to the second floor and at the back entrance.

The officers said they don't have any idea what's going on.

As of 5pm yesterday, the agents and the officers were still in the building.

The manager of Kase II Building stated that he learned from their maintenance man at 9am that the access to the second floor had been blocked by FBI and the police.

The building is owned by a Japanese company, Marianas Seaside Development Corp.

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Cebu Pacific says Saipan route 'being looked at'

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

MANILA, Philippines—Adding a Manila-Saipan route to the Cebu Pacific portfolio could be a possibility, although nothing concrete has been planned to expand the low-cost carrier's service to the CNMI.

It would boil down to the success of the Manila-Guam route, according to Charo Lagaman last Saturday during the final day of the Resorts World Manila's Stay and Cruise familiarization tour. Lagaman is the carrier's Corporate Communications Corporate Affairs director.

"It's something that's on the drawing board. It's one of the places we are looking at but nothing definite yet. When we make expansion plans there are a lot of things to consider but definitely it's among the places that are being explored," she said at Maxim Hotel's high-end Impressions Restaurant.

CNMI and Guam media who took part in the six-day, five-night cruise of the *SuperStar Virgo* flew from U.S. territory to the Philippine capital via Cebu Pacific.

Lagaman said Cebu Pacific is the ideal carrier for those looking to take a vacation in the Philippines for leisure, sightseeing, or shopping.

"It's great because, for a fraction of the cost, you could fly to the Philippines, enjoy a luxury vacation here, you can also do your wellness checkup in one of our world-class medical facilities, and maybe at the same time explore one of the islands in the Philippines. You get more value for your vacation."

She added that Cebu Pacific is the only Philippine LCC that has a direct route to Guam. The carrier's base fare also allows the flyer to choose the package he or she wants.

"If you plan to shop you can prepay for extra luggage and those who don't want to shop don't have to pay for luggage," she said.

When asked if Cebu Pacific is looking to enter into an agreement with RWM to package the flight to Manila from Guam with the Stay and Cruise program, Lagaman had RWM Corporate Communications director Owen Cammayo respond.

"If you're talking about future partnerships with other carriers like Cebu Pacific and then I say yes that can be possible anytime soon. Obviously more people will be attracted to go on these cruises," Cammayo said.

While there are no specific packaged plans at this point, there's a very big possibility for partnership since it makes sense from a business perspective.

The short distance and the Marianas having a relatively large Filipino population were the reasons why RWM launched the Stay and Cruise promotions in the region.

"The [Marianas] lies a mere 3 1/2 hours from the Philippines so it really makes sense to tap that market because of the proximity and the affinity with the Filipinos living in the Marianas," he said

SuperStar Virgo will again be home-ported in Manila this December, with a cruise to Palawan and Japan.

Boat captain Jan Blomquist congratulated his crew for a successful maiden voyage of the *SuperStar Virgo* last Thursday.

He acknowledged some minor glitches on the first voyage but assured that everything will be smooth sailing from now on.

Blomquist also said the cost of fuel remains the biggest concern of the cruise line industry, but added that immigration has also resulted in delays in the embarkation and disembarkation of passengers.

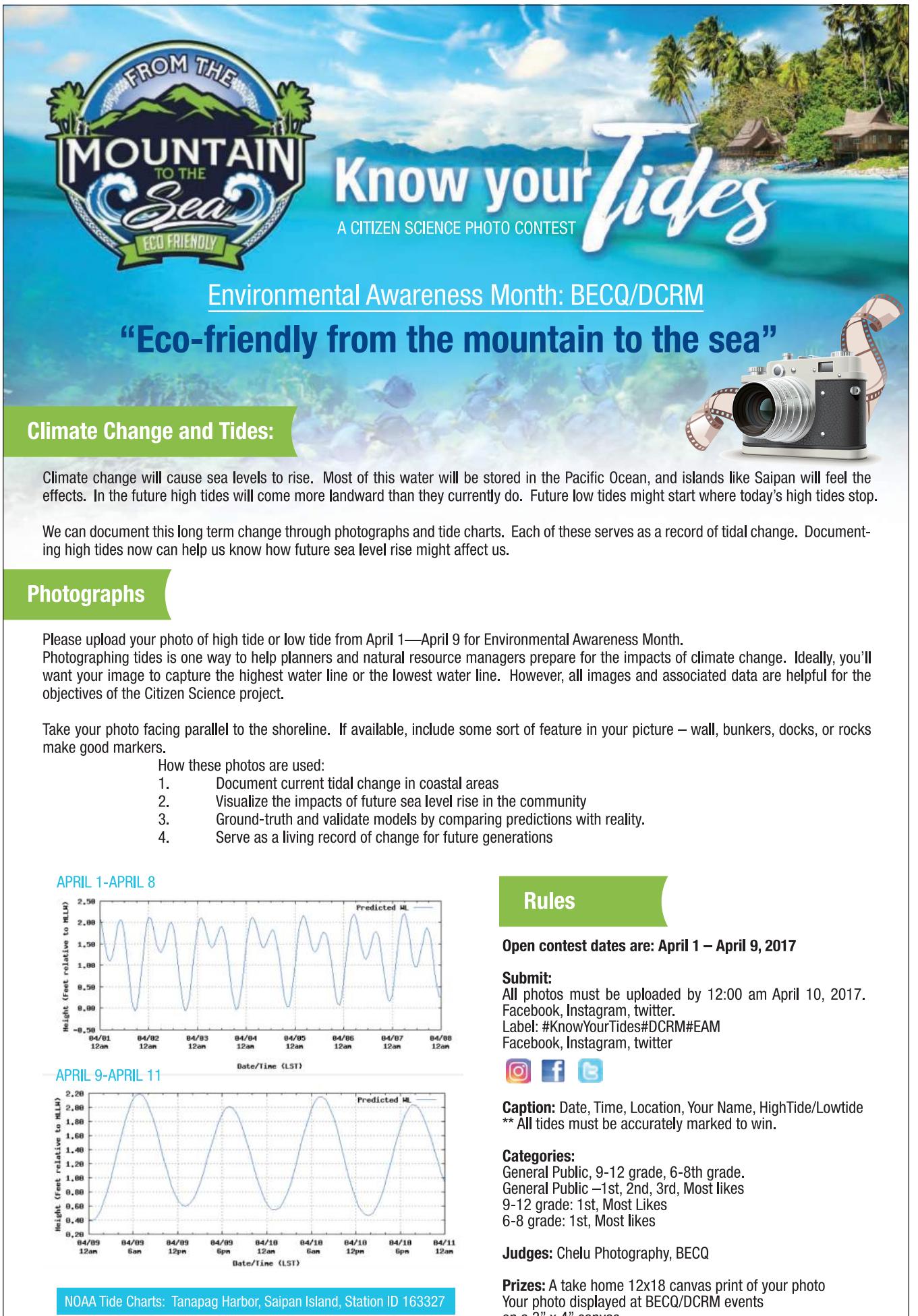
When asked for the difference between taking a jet airline to a destination as opposed to aboard a cruise liner, Blomquist said: "If a ship runs out of fuel you just float in the water. If a plane runs out of fuel, you crash."

Resorts World Manila's Stay and Cruise promotion starts at just $655 per person. It is inclusive of a stay at two RWM hotels—Winford Hotel and Casino and Belmont—and a cruise aboard *SuperStar Virgo* as the luxury liner makes Manila its new homeport from March 19 to May 23.

Remaining sailing dates are March 29, April 3, 8, 13, 18, 23, and 28, and May 3, 8, 13, 18, and 23.

Guam and Saipan residents can directly avail of the Stay and Cruise package using credit card payments through the SSV RWM BUNDLE option at www.rwmanila.com/stayandcruise. The package is inclusive of two-night accommodations at Resorts World Manila hotels.

Those interested can also call John Hagemann at +63917878583/john.hagemann@rwmanila.com or Janine Chua at +639178788576/ janine.chua@rwmanila for more details. For other inquiries and reservations, contact Tourist/ Visitor Hotline at (02) 908-8833 or visit www.rwmanila.com.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Take your photo facing parallel to the shoreline. If available, include some sort of feature in your picture – wall, bunkers, docks, or rocks make good markers.
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Federal agents arrest Francisco Basa again

U.S. Marshals arrested on Tuesday a federal probationer who allegedly violated the conditions of his supervision again.

Francisco N. Basa was served with an arrest warrant that was issued at the request of the U.S. Probation Office.

Basa's initial appearance for a revocation hearing will be today, Thursday, at 11am, before Magistrate Judge Heather Kennedy at the U.S. District Court for the NMI.

U.S. Probation officer Gregory Arriola filed the petition to revoke Basa's supervision, saying he failed to appear for counseling sessions on Feb. 25 and March 4, 9, 10, 11.

Basa also failed to appear for drug testing on Feb. 25 and March 1, 4, 5, 13, Arriola said, and that Basa failed to follow the Probation Office's instructions on March 5, 2015.

The court had revoked Basa's supervised release several times in the past for violating the conditions of the terms of his probation. Most of the violations were for using methamphetamine.

In 2006, the federal court sentenced hiim to four years and six months in prison for conspiracy to distribute 50 grams of "ice." He was placed on five years of probation after completing the prison term. In May 2010, he was arrested for choking and punching his common-law wife. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

2 men arrested in separate cases

Police arrested two men in separate burglary and domestic violence incidents in Chalan Kiya and Susupe on Monday.

David Palacios Deleon Guerrero, 27, was arrested for burglary and theft. A $15,000 cash bail was imposed for his temporary release.

Allan James Boyer Dela Cruz, 36, was detained for assault and battery and disturbing the peace. The Superior Court imposed a $5,000 cash bail.

According to court records, seven police officers responded on Monday morning to a reported burglary-in-progress at a house in Chalan Kiya. The officers surrounded the house and when one officer opened the back door, Deleon Guerrero came out.

Police learned that the house owner had just installed a surveillance camera after noticing that items had been missing from their house lately.

It was the house owner's son who got notification from the surveillance camera about the burglary-in-progress. The son called the police. The house owner recognized the burglar as his nephew, Deleon Guerrero.

In the domestic violence case, a police officer was driving on Texas Road in Susupe when he noticed a vehicle that had stopped in the middle of the road on Monday at 6:52pm. The officer saw a man, later identified as Dela Cruz, holding the arm of a woman.

The officer noticed that the woman, Dela Cruz's girlfriend, had scratches on the knees and elbow.

The victim told police that Dela Cruz slapped her and grabbed her purse, causing her to fall to the ground. He allegedly slammed her on the ground and dragged her about 20 feet.

The victim said that she and Dela Cruz had an argument earlier that day. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

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2017 Nissan Rogue S 2WD retail price $27,995.00 less 20% downpayment. Financing at 5.4% APR for 72 monthly payments of $364.86 or $168.40 per paycheck based on 26 pay periods per year. Total deferred payment $26,269.92.

Judge dismisses Aguon case at OAG request

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho dropped yesterday the case against David James Aguon, who has been on trial since last week for allegedly punching a Navy veteran at a bar in Garapan last year.

The 31-year-old Aguon had been charged with aggravated assault and battery. The Office of the Attorney General requested the case's dismissal.

The prosecution can no longer re-file the case.

Assistant attorney general Betsy Weintraub stated that the Commonwealth has determined that continuing the prosecution of Aguon is not in the best interest of justice.

Weintraub briefly explained to the seven jurors the reason why the government has to dismiss the case in the middle of trial.

"I am embarrassed. I am sorry," Weintraub said.

After signing the dismissal order, Camacho told Aguon, a diver from Guam, that he is now a free man.

Aguon refused to comment after the hearing.

"I'm okay. There's nothing to say," he said.

In an interview, defense counsel Matthew Holley said he is grateful that they're able to move on and for his client, Aguon, to be able to go home.

"This was a case about a bar fight that turned into a bar fight in the courtroom," Holley said.

At the end of the day, Holley said, he commends the Office of the Attorney General for dismissing the case.

When asked why the prosecution dropped the case, Holley said ion his opinion, there's overwhelming evidence that Aguon was not the person who committed the assault.

Holley's co-counsel, Victorino Torres, was off-island yesterday.

Weintraub said they government dismissed the case because it's for the best interest of justice after they discovered some new information.

"We did the right thing," said Weintraub, referring to their decision to dismiss the case. Weintraub's co-counsel in the case is Jonathan Wilbersheild.

In the middle of the jury trial last week, the prosecution also dropped the charges of assault and battery and disturbing the peace.

The trial began last week, March 20. The prosecution already called five witnesses, including the alleged victim, 53-year-old Navy veteran Christopher Broome.

Broome testified that he had no idea who assaulted him inside the bar because the punch came from the "blind side."

Police said Broome told a police officer at the hospital, where he was treated for injuries on the nose, that he was punched in the face and was knocked out at White and Black Bar in western Garapan on March 5, 2016. The following day, Aguon was arrested inside Tribes Bar in Garapan.

OIA OKs $204K for managing 2 CUC projects

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
REPORTER
FERDIE_DELATORRE@SAIPANTRIBUNE.COM

The Office of Insular Affairs has authorized the release of $204,000 for the management and administration of two Commonwealth Utilities Corp. projects.

Special assistant attorney general Teresita J. Sablan, counsel for the CNMI government, informed the U.S. District Court for the NMI yesterday about OIA's authorization on Wednesday.

With OIA's approval, along with its two preceding authorizations for CUC Tank 103 repairs in the amount of $4,019,000 and the development of a facility waste management plan for CUC's power plants 1 and 2 in Lower Base in the amount of $777,000, the CNMI has met its CUC projects' funding obligation for 2017.

As with previous years, Sablan said, the efforts of the Department of the Interior, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the parties, and the Engineering and Environmental Management were instrumental in meeting this year's funding requirement.

OIA grants management specialist Keith W. Aughenbaugh notified CUC acting executive director Gary Camacho that OIA has reviewed memorandum dated March 17, 2017, requesting the use of fiscal year 2017 funding for construction management and administration of the repair of Tank 103 and secondary management area and power plants 1 and 2 waste management.

Aughenbaugh said OIA finds the project to be in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, Council on Environmental Quality Regulations, and DOI NEPA Regulations, and Draft Departmental Manual.

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Wishing our sweet princess Hannah a day filled with cupcakes and rainbows! We love and miss you so much!Happy 3rd Birthday Hannah baby! Much love from Jelena, Kaiden and Dilly Bam Bam.

Mystery Jackpot is over $8,241
The Best Little Gaming Club In Saipan
CLUB 88
Cash Drawings every evening Wed-Sun
HOT NEW GAMES! Mystery Progressive Jackpots
Giving away every Saturday starting April 8
APRIL Stravaganza
It keeps getting biger & bigger!
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50in
60in
70in
Gives away more cash more often!
Big Jackpots more often
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HELP WANTED

Mariana Entertainment (Club 88) is recruiting immediately for 1 (one)

IT/Slot Technician

Job Duties to include (but not limited to):
IT/Slot Technician will be responsible for the maintenance and repair of computers, software, gaming machines and surveillance equipment. This is a full time position.

Qualifications:
Must have experience in the maintenance of computer systems including repair, software maintenance and device maintenance. Must also have knowledge of slot machines, repair, Installation, programming and maintenance. Must have good customer service skills and be able to obtain CNMI gaming license.

Please email resume to:
kw.saipan@gmail.com

Defendant claims he got faulty legal advice

Saying he received faulty advice from his prior counsels about his possible sentence, a suspect in a sex trafficking case now wants to withdraw his guilty plea.

Wei Lin, through Bruce Berline, said his prior counsels advised him that if he pleads guilty, he would receive a likely sentence of three to six years in prison.

Berline said that prior to Lin's guilty plea, his then-counsels, David Banes and Michael Dotts, advised him that, if he pleads guilty to conspiracy to commit sex trafficking as part of a plea deal, he would face a likely sentencing range of three to six years imprisonment after enhancements.

Relying on this advice that he would avoid a mandatory minimum sentence of 15 years in prison, Lin agreed to plead guilty to conspiracy to commit sex trafficking.

Lin said he was never advised that he might face a sentence of 30 years to life imprisonment under the sentencing guidelines.

Berline said that Lin was neither advised that he could face a sentence of 16 years imprisonment at the low end of the possible guidelines range.

"Defendant Lin expressly relied on this gross mischaracterization when he made his decision to plead guilty," the lawyer added.

Lin was sentenced to 235 months in prison. He appealed.

In November 2016, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit reversed the sentence and remanded the case to the U.S. District Court for the NMI for resentencing. The Ninth Circuit ruled that the District Court erred in calculating Lin's base offense level. Lin had tried to withdraw his guilty plea as his base offense level was set at 34, but the Ninth Circuit's decision makes his argument moot.

Under the base offense level 34, the sentence is between 151 months to 188 months imprisonment.

Lin was accused of luring women from China to Saipan on false promises of jobs and then forcing them into prostitution once they got on the island. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month

The Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence and the Division of Youth Services are inviting the public to take part in the proclamation signing ceremony for Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Child Abuse & Neglect Awareness Month on Monday, April 3, 2017, at 10am at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

The proclamation signing ceremony will have April 2017 recognized as Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Child Abuse & Neglect Awareness Month in the CNMI.

The aim of Sexual Assault Awareness Month is to bring much needed attention to the issue of sexual assault through education and awareness. Also, raising awareness helps give hope and support to victims, survivors and the community by working to remove the stigma and fear around speaking out against sexual violence.

This year's Sexual Assault Awareness Month theme for the CNMI is "Engaging All Voices."

Child Abuse & Neglect Awareness Month is about bringing community awareness on the devastating impact of child abuse and neglect, as well as to promote ways in which communities can address these issues and foster the emotional and social wellbeing of families and children.

Events and activities throughout April 2017 for SAAM include Walks Against Sexual Violence on Wednesday, April 5, in Kagman II and on Wednesday, April 19, in Chalan Kanoa, with both events starting around 5pm.

Also, the highly anticipated S.A.F.E. Jamboree will be on Saturday, April 29, 2017, from 11am to 5pm at the Ada Gymnasium in Susupe. The community is invited to take part in an afternoon of fun activities and amazing performances. Details on events and activities for Tinian and Rota will be shared and announced shortly.

In addition, tune in every Tuesday morning in April to KKMP on 92.1 FM and on Saturday, April 8, 2017, for the Marianas Agupa radio show on 100.3 FM to hear professionals and community members discuss various topics related to SAAM.

For more information related to SAAM, contact NMCADSV at (670) 234-3878 or email info@endviolencenmi.org. For more updates and news, follow NMCADSV on Facebook, Twitter (@EndViolenceNMI) and Instagram (@nmcadsv).

For more information related to Child Abuse & Neglect Awareness Month, contact the Division of Youth Services at (670) 664-2550 or 664-2565. ***(PR)***

'MENTOR A MYPRO' CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

On Wednesday at the Joeten Motors Kia showroom, some of the CNMI's leading professionals met to offer some advice to young professionals in the CNMI. Here, from left, Imperial Pacific International vice president for Human Resource Bertha Guerrero, IT&E customer service manager and CNMI Board of Education acting chair Janice Marie A. Tenorio, Education Commissioner Cynthia Deleon Guerrero, Nicole Babauta, director of Small Business Development Center with the Department of Commerce, and Serina Reyes of T. Galleria.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Mathew Deleon Guerrero, chief of staff of Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres, Rep. Ivan Blanco, Board of Education acting chair and IT&E customer service manager Janice Marie A. Tenorio and Education Commissioner Cynthia Deleon Guerrero.

Red Cross Walkathon tomorrow

The American Red Cross NMI Chapter is a set for this year's 31st Walkathon tomorrow, which starts at the 4-H building in Susupe.

Through the efforts of CNMI school children, the walkathon will surely be a huge success.

"We have been working for weeks to prepare for an extra special event this year," said co-chair Patty P. McDonald. "We have great giveaways for the walkers and four bounce houses for the younger children."

The Coca-Cola group, along with the Pacific Islands Club, are this year's major donors and "have a long track record of helping our community, particularly with events focused on fitness," said Tayna Belyeu-Camacho, Red Cross board chair.

This year's walkathon will take place on Saipan, Rota and Tinian on April 1.

In addition to the 10K the event will have a 5K and Head Start 2K course for the younger children.

A $20 donation to the Red Cross provides entry to the walk, an event T-shirt, a Mickey Mouse plush toy and refreshments from Coke, Foremost and Subway.

Walkers who raise $75 will receive two waterpark passes from PIC.

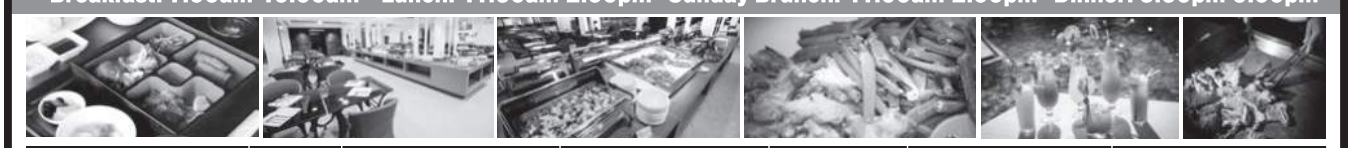
The Red Cross Walkathon is the largest walking event in Micronesia, with more than 2,500 participants. Prizes will be given out to schools with the most number of walkers and those that raise the most funds.

For more information about the Walkathon and how to participate or volunteer, call the NMI Chapter at 234-3459. ***(PR)***

GRAND VRIO RESORT SAIPAN

Welcome to enjoy fantastic buffet at our **"Tropicana Restaurant"** (2nd floor of Taga Tower)! Performance is available on Sunday Brunch. All you can eat and drink! Champagne, beers.

*** Breakfast: 7:00am-10:00am * Lunch: 11:30am-2:00pm *Sunday Brunch: 11:00am-2:00pm *Dinner: 5:30pm-9:00pm**



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Restaurant Tropicana			3/1	3/2	3/3 Buffet Lunch $14 *Seafood & Sushi Night* *Reg.: $35 (Local: $25)*	3/4 *Seafood & Sushi Night* *Reg.: $35 (Local: $25)*
3/5 **Sunday Brunch $22** *Seafood & Sushi Night* *Reg.: $35 (Local: $25)*	3/6	3/7 *Seafood & Sushi Night* *Reg.: $35 (Local: $25)*	3/8 Buffet Lunch $14 *Seafood & Sushi Night* *Reg.: $35 (Local: $25)*	3/9	3/10 Buffet Lunch $14 *Seafood & Sushi Night* *Reg.: $35 (Local: $25)*	3/11 *Seafood & Sushi Night* *Reg.: $35 (Local: $25)*
3/12 **Sunday Brunch $22** *Seafood & Sushi Night* *Reg.: $35 (Local: $25)*	3/13	3/14 *Seafood & Sushi Night* *Reg.: $35 (Local: $25)*	3/15 Buffet Lunch $14 *Seafood & Sushi Night* *Reg.: $35 (Local: $25)*	3/16	3/17 Buffet Lunch $14 *Seafood & Sushi Night* *Reg.: $35 (Local: $25)*	3/18 *Seafood & Sushi Night* *Reg.: $35 (Local: $25)*
3/19 **Sunday Brunch $22** *Seafood & Sushi Night* *Reg.: $35 (Local: $25)*	3/20	3/21 *Seafood & Sushi Night* *Reg.: $35 (Local: $25)*	3/22 Buffet Lunch $14 *Seafood & Sushi Night* *Reg.: $35 (Local: $25)*	3/23	3/24 Buffet Lunch $14 *Seafood & Sushi Night* *Reg.: $35 (Local: $25)*	3/25 *Seafood & Sushi Night* *Reg.: $35 (Local: $25)*
3/26 **Sunday Brunch $22** *Seafood & Sushi Night* *Reg.: $35 (Local: $25)*	3/27	3/28 *Seafood & Sushi Night* *Reg.: $35 (Local: $25)*	3/29 Buffet Lunch $14 *Seafood & Sushi Night* *Reg.: $35 (Local: $25)*	3/30	3/31 Buffet Lunch $14 *Seafood & Sushi Night* *Reg.: $35 (Local: $25)*	4/1 *Seafood & Sushi Night* *Reg.: $35 (Local: $25)*

"Dolphin Restaurant" *(10th floor of Crystal Tower in Grandvrio Resort Saipan)*

has reopened as A-La-Carte restaurant. Welcome to enjoy fast & nice Lunch Menu ($8~) and authentic Japanese Shabu Shabu or Sukiyaki for your dinner ($35). "Spectacular Ocean view and Sunset!" Starting from Nov. 07, 2016, our Dolphin restaurant brings out "Daily Chef's Special Lunch" from Mon. to Fri.; **EVERYTHING IS DIFFERENT!**$12 only, 15 servings per day; "First In First Out!" Opening time: Everyday Lunch: 11:30am-2:00pm Last Order: 1:30pm / Dinner 5:30pm-9:00pm Last Order: 8:30pm

Starlight BBQ

"Starlight BBQ" Dinner Buffet Location:

Poolside Price: Reg. AD $39 CH: $19 (Local: AD $35/ CH $17)
Business hrs: 6:00pm-9:00pm
Menu: " All you can eat & drink" - beers, red & white wine, soft drinks, oolong tea and juices.

AIRI COFFEE LOUNGE

Lounge Business hrs: 10:00am-6:00pm

Come and taste delicious curry & sandwich set ($7.00 only), cake, café latte, organic smoothies… with unique ocean view. Pizza Set ($10.00) Available Now!

POOL SIDE BAR

Business Hrs: 1pm - 10pm
Last Order: 9:30pm
"Happy Hours" 4pm-7pm
20% discount available for all drinks including cocktails.

For reservation or inquiry, please call: 670-237-2527 or E-mail: food.beverage@grandvrio-saipan.com

Okada Corporation dba Okadaya

Paseo De Marianas Garapan, Saipan

Okada Corporation is in need of the following:

- **OPERATION MANAGER $7.50-$8.50**
- **HEAD CHEF - $7.50-$8.50**
- **COOK - $6.55**
- **SERVICE CREW - $6.55**

Be able to handle business operations as well as kitchen duties to ensure the business efficiency & profitable operations. Must be passionate about food and have broad knowledge in Japanese cuisine included but not limited to Sushi, Tempura and Sashimi and specialty in making Hand Made Soba from the powder as well as other cultural dishes and different food preparations.

(Must have at least 5 yrs experience for operation manager).Must be of good health and have a good moral character, must be able to follow grooming standard. Can speak and understand Japanese. Have knowledge in Japanese products.

All applicants must provide, must have a reliable transportation, and must agree to drug test.
If interested please contact by email to okadayasaipan@gmail.com

Want a career in aviation service?

The Office of the Mayor of Saipan, the Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance program, and Marianas Aviation Services are collaborating to offer a scholarship program for those who want to pursue a career in airline ticketing and ground handling.

In a conference meeting on Wednesday at the Saipan Mayor's office, it was announced that financial assistance is now available for those interested in undergoing training with Marianas Aviation Services in the field of airline ticketing and ground handling.

Marianas Aviation Services is a full service aviation career school. To be eligible to obtain the scholarship, an applicant must be 18 years old; a U.S. citizen or a green card holder; must read, write, speak, and understand fluent English; must have a valid CNMI driver's license; must not have any criminal background; must be able to lift 50 lbs; must have reliable transportation; must maintain a well-groomed appearance; must be able to work odd hours; and customer service experience for up to two years is preferred.

Rob Combs, president and chief instructor of Marianas Aviation Services, said the training will be hands-on. Classes will begin on April 17 and will end on April 29. Class hours is from 6pm to 10pm and training will take place at the Marianas Aviation Services office above the Payless Shoe Source. To apply for the scholarship, pick up a form at the Saipan Mayor's office or SHEFA. ***(Kimberly A. Bautista)***

In a conference meeting on Wednesday at the Saipan Mayor's office, it was announced that financial assistance is now available for those interested in undergoing training with Marianas Aviation Service.
KIMBERLY BAUTISTA

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director
3rd Floor, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building
P.O. Box 501220 CK Saipan, MP 96950-1220
Telephone: (670) 664-4282 • Facsimile: (670) 235-5131

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-17-007

CUC FACILITY FENCE REPAIRS

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the repair of security fences for multiple Saipan water facilities in need of fence repairs due to damage caused by typhoon Soudelor.

This project is funded by the United Sates Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

CUC requires the Project to be completed in **120 calendar** days from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on **April 13, 2017 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-17-007, CUC Facility Fence Repairs"**, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on April 28, 2017**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission.

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

A Bid Guarantee of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and *Performance bond* must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or request for clarification regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **4:00 PM (ChST) on April 17, 2017** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Yvonne Cabrera, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer – via email yvonne.cabrera@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY CAMACHO
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Lawmakers say bill is anti-worker

WASHINGTON—The Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions held a hearing yesterday on the Tribal Labor Sovereignty Act of 2017, H.R. 986. This bill would strip workers of their protections under the National Labor Relations Act at any commercial enterprise owned and operated by an Indian tribe that is located on tribal lands.

This bill arises from a dispute between two competing principles: the sovereign rights that Indian tribes possess in matters of local self-government, and the rights of workers to organize, bargain collectively, and engage in concerted activities for mutual aid and protection. Rather than attempting to reconcile these competing interests, H.R. 986 chooses sovereignty for some over the rights of others.

"I am a Chamorro, one of the native people of the Northern Marianas, and fully appreciate the importance of tribal sovereignty for Native Americans" said Rep. Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP), a ranking member of the subcommittee. "But I also believe deeply in workers' right to organize, to collectively bargain, and to protect their right to fight for a safe workplace, fair pay to provide a living for themselves and their families and good benefits."

The Tribal Labor Sovereignty Act of 2017 is designed to overturn a National Labor Relations Board decision in *San Manuel Indian Bingo and Casino* that, under a Bush-era NLRB (by a 3-1 bipartisan vote), asserted jurisdiction over a tribal casino on tribal lands. The NLRB will exercise jurisdiction over tribal enterprises, unless doing so would: (1) interfere with tribal rights of self-governance in purely intramural matters (2) abrogate rights guaranteed by treaty or (3) be contrary to congressional intent (via "proof" in the legislative history or statutory language).

Since this decision, the NLRB has asserted jurisdiction over a number of tribal casinos. Nationwide 75% of the employees in tribal casinos are not members of a tribe, and would lose protections of the NLRA should this law be enacted.

In some cases tribes have adopted tribal labor ordinances that respect workers' rights, and in other cases unions have adopted ordinances where unions are expressly forbidden from setting foot on tribal lands. Except for the NLRA, there is no national minimum standard for the 567 recognized Indian tribes.

"While UNITE HERE workers enjoy the protections of Tribal Labor Ordinances at a number of casinos in California, they rely upon the National Labor Relations Act as a backstop if a TLRO is weakened or not enforced," said Jack Gribbon, California political director of UNITEHERE. "This could happen when or if a state-tribal compact is amended in the future. The elimination of NLRA jurisdiction over tribal enterprises would undermine these collective bargaining agreements in tribal casinos and in many other commercial enterprises owned and operated by tribes in our country."

The sovereign rights of Native American tribes must be balanced along with the rights of workers to organize and collectively bargain. Unfortunately, enacting the Tribal Labor Sovereignty Act of 2017 weakens workers' ability to bargain for their fair share of wealth they create for tribes. ***(PR)***

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-17-021

IFET DRIVE 4-INCH WATERLINE PROJECT

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Construction of Ifet Drive 4-Inch Waterline Project in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This work consists of new installation of new 4-inch & 6-inch distribution lines and tapping to existing mains. The work also includes the installation of new flush hydrant, new water lateral connections, relocation and reconnection of existing water meters and asphalt pavement restoration, etc. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications. CUC requires the Project to be completed in **120 calendar days** from date of award of contract

This project is funded by a grant from the United Sates of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $50.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on **March 29, 2017** at **10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) Original and Five (5) Hard Copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-IFB-17-021, Ifet Drive 4-Inch Waterline Project" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on April 05, 2017**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or otherwise secured in a manner satisfactory to CUC, for the protection of all persons supplying labor and material to the contractor or its subcontractors for the performance of the work provided for in the contract.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on March 31, 2017** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Marcela Tenorio, CUC P&S, Administrative Support Assistant – marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM, OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Caller Box 10007
Saipan, MP 96950

Tel.: (670) 664-2375
Fax: (670) 664-2408

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
THE MONITORING SERVICES FOR THE POST CLOSURE OF THE PUERTO RICO DUMPSITE IN GARAPAN, SAIPAN
RFP17-GOV-112

Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Victor B. Hocog through the Capital Improvement Office (CIP), (collectively, "Commonwealth") are soliciting sealed proposals from qualified contractors to provide **Labor, Material and Equipment for the MONITORING SERVICES of the Post Closure Maintenance of the Puerto Rico Dumpsite** in Garapan, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

Proposal procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, currently in effect, and with the Northern Mariana Islands Administrative Code (NMIAC) §70-30-3-725 Gratuities and Kickbacks and §70.30.3-730 Prohibition Against Contingent Fees. Public Law 15-95 Local Preference Act, as amended by Public Law 15-118 does not apply to this federally funded project. All wage rates for employees performing the work, labor and services on this project shall be paid at the current U.S. prevailing wage rates established for the CNMI.

The project package is available at the Governor's CIP Office, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building in Capitol Hill, Saipan. A pre-proposal meeting regarding this project will be held on Tuesday, April 11, 2017, 10:00 a.m. at the CIP Office in Capitol Hill. Questions regarding the Request for Proposals shall be addressed to Ms. Elizabeth S. Balajadia, P.E., Project Manager, CIP Office, at esb.cip@gmail.com or facsimile (670) 664-2272 no later than 4:00 p.m., ChST, April 20, 2017.

The total proposal length shall not exceed 15 pages in length. A contractor that submits a proposal as a prime contractor cannot also submit as a subcontractor on another proposal. However, as a subcontractor, a company may be included in multiple proposals by different contractors.

Proposals will be evaluated and scored based on the following criteria:

1.	Qualifications and experience on similar projects	30%
2.	Past Performance with CNMI Projects	30%
3.	Cost	40%

Performance time for completion of this project will be a two year contract with an option to renew for six months upon issuance of notice to proceed. Contractors will be assessed $200/day for any delays in the monitoring and reporting to BECQ and USEPA based on the Post Closure Maintenance Plan prepared by GHD Inc., May 2014.

Discussions shall be conducted with the top 3 ranked contractors. After a selection is made, negotiations will be conducted with the highest qualified contractor to determine the final fair and reasonable price of the contract for the work to be performed. The successful proposers will be subjected to a responsibility and responsiveness determination in compliance with Section 3-301 of the CNMI Procurement Regulations.

Proposals must be sealed and marked RFP17-GOV-112 "To provide Labor, Materials and Equipment for the MONITIORING SERVICES OF THE POST CLOSURE MAINTENANCE OF PUERTO RICO DUMPSITE" in Garapan, Saipan. For proposers within the CNMI, one original and three (3) copies of the proposals must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply located at the former Emergency Management Office, Building No. 1301, Ascencion Drive, Capitol Hill on Saipan no later than 10:00 a.m. ChST, April 26, 2017. Proposers located outside the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their proposal by submitting a Notice of intent to propose. Notices of intent to propose must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than 10:00 a.m., ChST, April 26, 2017 and may be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com.

For proposers located outside the CNMI, one original and three (3) copies of the sealed proposals must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than April 26, 2017 and must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than May 5, 2017. Failure to submit the required number of copies of the proposal may be cause for rejection of a proposal.

The Commonwealth reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to waive any imperfection in any proposal if, in its opinion to do so would be in the best interests of the CNMI government. All proposals shall become the property of the CNMI government.

/s/Virginia C. Villagomez
Governor's Authorized Representative

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Memorial service and Judiciary schedule today

A special proceeding of the courts will be held today, March 31, 2017, at 3pm. A memorial service will be held for Probation Officer II John Peter Duenas Del Rosario, who passed away on Saturday, March 25, 2017. Del Rosario faithfully served the Commonwealth under the Superior Court's Office of Adult Probation and Supervision.

All are welcome to attend the special proceeding of the courts set for 3pm in the Supreme Court courtroom.

Business hours for the CNMI Judiciary and all its divisions on Saipan for today, March 31, 2017, will be 8am to 2:30pm. On Rota and Tinian, business hours will remain at 7:30am to 4:30pm.

For additional information, contact Nora V. Borja at 236-9715 or Nora.Borja@justice.gov.mp or Patrick V. Diaz at 236-9765 or Patrick.Diaz@justice.gov.mp. ***(PR)***

High surf advisory in effect

Based on information received from the National Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam, and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, a large north swell is causing hazardous surf in the Marianas. A strong north to northeast winds associated with a shear line is causing a north swell to build across the Marianas.

The National Weather Service has issued a high surf advisory, which is in effect until 6pm today, Friday.

Along north facing shores., hazardous surf of 8 to 10 feet is expected through tonight. Surf will begin to decrease today and could fall below hazardous levels this evening.

EOC encourages the public to continue being proactive in keeping their families and community safe. ***(EOC)***

Power outages on April 1, 4

There will be a scheduled power interruption tomorrow, April 1, 2017, from 5:30am to 10:30am and on Tuesday, April 4, 2017, from 9am to 2pm.

In the first outage, it is intended to de-energize the primary lines to allow Commonwealth Utilities Corp. line crew to safely replace eight wooden power poles with concrete poles along Alageta Rd. in Kagman 2. This will affect CUC customers in Kagman 2. Water wells to be affected include KG-7, KG-8, KG-9, KG-14, and KG-15. The whole Kagman village will also be without water services throughout the power interruption

On Tuesday, CUC line crew will replace five wooden power poles with concrete poles along Chalan Tun Herman Pan in front of Sky Chefs. Areas to be affected are POI Aviation, Delta Cargo, United Cargo, Sky Chefs, CUC Sand Filtration, Airport Mobil and Red Cross. Water wells to be affected include IF-4, IF-7, and IF-8.

For more information, contact the CUC Customer Call Center (664-4282). ***(CUC)***

Saipan chamber meeting on April 5

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce will hold its next general membership meeting on Wednesday, April 5, at the Seaside Hall, Kanoa Resort. Guest speakers are Oscar Camacho of the Commonwealth Development Authority regarding the State Small Business Credit Initiative program and Jenny Heglund, with an update on the efforts of the CARE organization. Luncheon begins at 11:30am, with the meeting portion starting promptly at noon. ***(PR)***

Partial water outage on Tinian

There will be a scheduled partial water outage on Tinian today, April 1, 2017, from 6am to 7pm, and this Sunday, April 2, 2017, from 8am to 7pm to install the necessary upgrades on the PRV system for the waterlines. Areas affected by these outages include San Jose, Carolinas Heights, and portions of Marpo Valley. For more information, call 433-9261/9264/9265. ***(CUC)***

GTC Elementary sets Kinder registration

Kindergarten registration at Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School for school year 2017 – 2018 is scheduled to begin on April 3, 2017, from 8:30am to 11:30am and from 1pm to 3:30pm. Registration will take place in the school's main office (in the cafeteria). There are only 40 slots available, and registration will be on a first come, first serve basis. Please note that children entering Kindergarten must be 5 years of age on or before Sept. 30, 2017. All required documents must be submitted and received by a certified staff in order for your child to be on the roster. For more information, feel free to call 664-3400. ***(PR)***

Participants sought in research

Those who participated in the Pacific STAR Center for Young Writers project in 2006 are being invited to take part in a research project conducted by a CNMI resident Jennifer Furey Maratita.

In 2006, young writers were asked to contribute to a book, titled *We Drank Our Tears: Memories of the Battles for Saipan and Tinian as Told by Our Elders* (Tuten-Puckett, 2004). Maratita's research questions will focus on the understanding of the impact this project had and its relevance in your life nowadays. The impacts of shared narratives across generations in the CNMI are of special concern. For more information, email Maratita at jennifer.maratita@waldenu.edu or call/text (670) 483-3879. ***(PR)***

Navy training at FDM, Warning Area 517

ASAN, Guam—The U.S. Navy will conduct training at the island of Farallon de Medinilla on March 31 from 10am to 3:30pm. The public—especially fishermen, commercial pilots and marine tour operators—are advised to stay clear of the areas during the dates and times indicated. ***(PR)***

Call for historical papers

The Northern Marianas Humanities Council, University of Guam, Northern Marianas College, and Guampedia are calling for papers for the 3rd Marianas History Conference. The conference will be held on Saipan on Sept. 1-3, 2017, at a venue to be announced later.

The deadline for abstracts is April 28, 2017. Conference presenters will be allotted 20 minutes to present. For more information about the conference, contact council staff at 235-4785 or visit the council's website at: www.northernmarianashumanities.org. ***(PR)***

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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EDITORIAL

Facebook shouldn't facilitate censorship in Pakistan

This month, the rulers of Pakistan stepped up a campaign against blasphemy, frightening news from an Islamic nation where insulting the official religion is a capital crime.

From an American perspective, this would merely be another, distant nation's horror—if it weren't for one aspect of the story.

As part of the crackdown, Pakistani leaders have asked executives of Facebook and Twitter to help them help root out people who post blasphemous material on social media sites from anywhere in the world.

In response, Facebook said in mid-March that it planned to send a team to Pakistan to discuss the government's request. Really?

And this week, Pakistan's interior ministry claimed Facebook's administrators have been blocking and removing blasphemous content from the site. Really?!

It's heartening to read that Facebook said in a statement that, in considering government requests, it keeps in mind "the goal of protecting the privacy and rights of our users."

However, the situation calls for stronger assurance that Facebook will do its part to defend the basic human values of free thought and free expression.

It's understood that social networking companies have a complicated challenge in dealing with an array of cultures and standards of freedom in countries all over the world.

But Facebook and Twitter—or any American company facing pressure such as this from Pakistani leaders—must bluntly refuse to cooperate in any way with a repressive regime's efforts to forcibly squelch free expression and dissent, even if their refusal means having access to their sites blocked in those countries.

As Michael De Dora, the main representative to the United Nations from the nonprofit Center for Inquiry, said: "We do not want to see the people of Pakistan cut off from such a powerful and far-reaching platform as Facebook. But we hope Facebook makes clear that it will not compromise its users' safety or freedom through disclosure."

Pakistan is, sadly, far from the only country that doesn't understand the right to free speech that most Americans take for granted.

The Pew Research Center found last year that, as of 2014, 26 percent of the world's countries and territories had laws or policies against blasphemy (that is, showing a lack of reverence for a god or sacred thing), and 13 percent had laws or policies against apostasy (the renunciation of a religion), the offenses calling for everything from fines to execution. Such laws are most common in the Middle East and North Africa.

But Pakistan's policies, and its leaders' rhetoric, are worse than most. According to unofficial tallies, since 1990 at least 68 people have been killed there over allegations of blasphemy, including a provincial governor shot dead six years ago by a police guard who accused him of blasphemy after he defended a Christian woman who insulted the Prophet Muhammad; and currently about 40 people are on death row or

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Trump deserves some credit for Islamic State successes

By DOYLE MCMANUS
Los Angeles Times

Doyle McManus is a columnist for the Los Angeles Times. *Readers may email him at doyle.mcmanus@latimes.com.*

While Washington has been absorbed in battles over health care and incipient scandals, a real war is escalating sharply in Syria and Iraq: the one against Islamic State.

Without much public notice, thousands of U.S. combat troops are back on the ground in the Middle East: roughly 7,000 in Iraq, almost 1,000 in Syria, and 2,500 in Kuwait.

Those troops aren't only special operations forces; they include artillery teams fighting in Iraq and a helicopter unit that has flown behind Islamic State lines in Syria.

U.S. airstrikes have intensified, too, and civilian casualties have spiked dramatically since the beginning of the year. As many as 200 civilians may have been killed in Mosul last week; the Pentagon says it's investigating.

The death toll is a tragedy. But it's also a grim sign that the long offensive against Islamic State, begun by President Obama in 2014, is moving rapidly toward success _ and for that, President Trump deserves some credit.

Under Obama, who waged a "light footprint" strategy with minimal U.S. troops, Islamic State lost most of the territory it once held in Iraq and almost a third of what it held in Syria.

But taking the extremist group's most important strongholds, Mosul in Iraq and Raqqah in Syria, was taking longer.

Enter Trump. The new president, after claiming he had a secret plan to win the war, told his generals to give him one in 30 days. They responded with an outline _ a "skeleton plan," in the words of Defense Secretary James Mattis – that could be described as Obama Plus: more bombing, more troops, fewer restrictions on commanders.

"The Obama strategy wasn't failing, but it was slow," James Jeffrey, a former ambassador (and former Army officer) who's advising the administration, told me. "This is more _ not only more troops, but more willingness to use them. It's a change of maybe 20 percent, but it's an important 20 percent."

Paradoxically, the success of those changes comes with its own danger: the peril of "catastrophic success," a phrase military officials use to describe the 2003 invasion of Iraq. That experience taught a lesson: Conquering territory doesn't guarantee that a war will stay won. So Trump administration officials are quietly planning for an open-ended commitment of U.S. troops to both Iraq and Syria for "stabilization operations" after Islamic State is defeated. And that may well require more American troops, not fewer.

In Iraq, stabilization means persuading the government in Baghdad, which told U.S. forces to leave in 2010, to let them stay longer.

In Syria, where the U.S. doesn't want to cooperate with the government of President Bashar Assad, it means setting up an interim administration of local leaders under the protection of U.S. and allied troops.

A State Department official said stabilization means "making sure people can come back to their homes, there's a security apparatus in place that's locally based, there's a local government in place."

In Jeffrey's view, it also means a continued effort to negotiate the Assad regime out of power. "If the Assad regime remains in power, you'll just get another (Islamic State)," he said.

It all sounds expensive, ambitious and not quite in keeping with Trump's campaign promise to take the U.S. "out of the nation-building business."

That may be one reason officials take pains to say their goals are limited.

"Stabilization ... is very distinct from long-term reconstruction, long-term nation-building," a State Department official said.

Eventually, officials say, they hope the oil-rich countries of the Persian Gulf will pay to rebuild Syria and Iraq.

Good luck with that. Other countries aren't likely to pony up _ and the effort isn't likely to succeed _ unless the United States is involved too.

One more dilemma: To make stabilization work, Trump is going to have to spend money on the State Department and foreign aid agencies whose budget he wants to cut. (That's not just my civilian opinion; Mattis says that every time he appears before Congress.)

It all sounds a lot more complicated than the strategy Trump

See TRUMP on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Car talk

By ED STEPHENS
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Visit Ed Stephens Jr. at EdStephensJr.com. His column runs every Friday.

Let's talk cars today. Here are three items:

1) The April edition of *Consumer Reports* magazine has been released. This is the annual automotive issue. It's very much worth the $6.99 cover price. As of mid-week this week, however, Saipan's Bestseller Bookstore was still awaiting its shipment. I am advised that only two copies are normally stocked.

As always, the feature I find of most interest is the car repair data, which provides an objective index of reliability. This is based on surveys given to car owners. This year's magazine covers the period from 2009 through 2016. The data I've seen over the years has jibed very closely with my experience for any given model of car.

The automotive edition also reviews new cars and carries related features.

2) Have you hugged your engine air filter lately? You might want to. It has a tough job, preventing your engine from inhaling abrasive coral dust, road dirt, and other contaminants.

Changing the air filter is one of the few items that a casual do-it-your-selfer can tend on a modern auto. I reckon that we might as well make the most of this interaction lest we get entirely alienated from the mechanical loop.

For decades I was blithely using a major brand of air filter that's widely sold at discount stores. When I recently pulled a new one of the box, though, I noticed that is was poorly constructed. I returned it to the store, inspected a few more examples on the store shelves, and gave up.

Since I don't have some kind of laboratory to test air filters, I assume that the readily-observable elements of a filter's construction are consistent with its overall quality. No, I can't prove that theory, but that's the way I'll place my bets.

As a result, I've switched from the discount approach to going to a real parts store, in this case NAPA, which carries a brand called "Wix" under the store label. That's a brand I remember from when I worked in a garage. Again, I have no way of doing scientific tests on this stuff, but the Wix filters, to my eyes and to my touch, seem far better built than the brand I recently abandoned. So I hoisted the black flag, yanked the air filters from the family cars, and replaced them with fresh, and presumably better, ones.

3) Santa gave me a Craftsman Mini LED Work Light for Christmas. This device, about the size of a cigar, is very useful. The catalog price is $6.99. It looks a little bit weird because the light comes out of the side via a line of six LEDs instead of coming out of the top via a lens and reflector.

I didn't appreciate the utility of this thing until I actually found myself poking around under the hood at night. Having a line of lights seemed to provide better depth-perception than a single-point light source does. The small size made it easy to maneuver around the engine and its accessories.

One of the light's end caps is magnetic so it can be self-supporting if you can find a ferrous surface under the hood. Of course, finding such a surface is harder and harder to do in this age of aluminum and plastic. Still, having such a magnet makes it a useful tool for retrieving dropped fasteners.

The flashlight body is plastic and well-suited to being held by the teeth, an inelegant but practical reality for anyone doing repairs at night. It runs on a trio of AAA-batteries (included) and claims 11 hours of continuous run time.

Mindful of Saipan's vulnerability to blackouts, I'll note that this light will illuminate an entire room, maybe not to the point that you'd want to overhaul a Swiss watch, but certainly to the point where you can read it. The trick is to diffuse the light somehow, since the direct glare will zap your vision. A sheet of folded paper can make a serviceable lampshade.

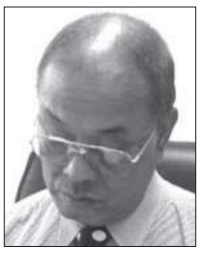
On that note, I'd suggest keeping these lights out of young or careless hands. The sweep of the beam is far broader than a normal flashlight's and it's easy to wind up looking at the wrong side of the equation.

There are similar designs from other brands. Thus far, however, I've only tested this example from Craftsman. Now that I've been sold on the idea, I have to admit I'd enjoy seeing a refinement that would allow the user to vary the brightness. If anyone knows of such a product I'd like to hear about it.

Trust in government sinks

By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune *and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands. All views expressed by the author are his/her own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and stance of the* Saipan Tribune.



A court in Hong Kong has found factual ties between NMI local politicians and their favorite gambling firm from the outset or 2013. What I call the "quintuplet" denied that the firm paid for their trips. This revelation only decimates or trashes trust in our governmental institutions.

The denial took a lot of fancy footing. Was it the decision granting a non-applicant exclusive rights to run a single license casino here?

Woefully troubling the deal struck that includes zero taxation of casino income. Macau levies 39 percent on its casino income. Why in the world is the casino here the only one in the global gambling industry exempt from taxation?

Perhaps the quintuplet: Raffy Torres, Biktot Hokog, and Tinian senators Francisco Cruz, Francisco Borja, and Raffy Demapan could explain why the denial of their ties with the firm. It's only a trip, so why shy from the truth? That explains why the "tiptoe" syndrome hailing from their treatment of the casino law. It's down to an art!

Perhaps they're out guarding the secrecy in their preconceived decision to hand the license to their favorite trip sponsor (not an applicant) while trashing the other two real applicants. This raises the specter of suspicion even deeper, doesn't it? Why were you folks singing *Silent Night* when it's supposed to be *Joy to the World*?

The details of the deal to which we're not privy remains in shreds of suspicion and definitely drains trust in the institutions of our local government. When trust no longer exists it ruins everything else downstairs.

Gomer Pyle would be yelling, "kerrup, kerrup, kerrup." Someone ought to tell him it's the newest tool to strengthening governance! You could access the story on the following website: https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-03-28/firm-linked-to-imperial-pacific-arranged-saipan-lawmakers-trips

China crackdown: China warns Macau and Vegas against luring its people to gamble overseas. The public security minister is out to completely cut promotions in China to stem money laundering and capital outflow.

Some 18 staff promoters from Crown Resorts in Australia have been held for questioning. The security minister is also on the lookout for promo agents from all over, including South Korea.

Meanwhile, kudos to gaming commissioner Joseph Reyes for advising Best Sunshine to veer off any further expenses on non-casino activities until its $7-billion project is fully complete. It's a sure way to ascertaining that its promised integrated resort is built to completion.

Power generation: The CUC board has reportedly pulled dealing with an intermediary (GPSM) in the planned purchase of a 10-megawatt generator. It now wants to deal directly with the manufacturer.

Caught with its pants down, it had no choice but to pull it up lest it becomes an immoral lewd show against ratepayers. The planned purchase would involve bond flotation to the tune of $30 million.

It makes it more vital that the issue is dealt with real competency because we would be there to demand total transparency. No more "tip-toe" syndrome involving public funds! Leave this corrupt tool on imperial Capital Hill.

The Toelkes are out spreading their wings to rein in money while their political connection is steady and firm.

For instance, I heard Robert Toelkes had a recent meeting with Sen. Sixto Igisomar at an out-of-the-way restaurant. Sixto was all smiles, though he looked apprehensive. Hope he didn't compromise fiduciary duty in the Mango meeting.

Mr. 6-2 must employ due diligence to demand information on Toelkes' failed JFK high school project in Guam and whatever else it could scrounge from the Alter City plan. Must learn to work with sound credibility! Why would it rely on a company that went bankrupt last year?

Reportedly, Albert Taitano, a board member from Rota, recused from voting. Good call in that I also learned he's an employee of the Toelkes. He doesn't have to muddy the water. Let Mr. 6-2 stir it full measure! I'd pace these issues in the interest of ratepayers, free! It matters to me the innocent is protected!

It's good to know that Rep. Ed Propst would file a TRO on the generator purchase so he sees with clarity what the deal entails. Good job, Ed! I mean if ratepayers would eventually be smothered with intermittent increases in other CUC services to meet debt service it's timely that you intervene now

Magoo on SOCA

My friend Magoo isn't enamored to hear another pompous speech about the state of the NMI. "It's the same tired song sung on a different day," he exclaimed.

But it's good to listen to the SOCA trumpeted just so we analyze what the beast is all about and whether it is a realistic assessment of serious people's issues!

Would the SOCA discuss a plan-based economic blueprint or would it slide into what's known in economics as "temperamental" offshoots as is the case today—second guessing—not educated guess.

Is the fickle single economic engine safe in the event geopolitical tension in the region escalates (U.S.-Sino) shutting down Chinese investments here? Would it include casino promo to deal with the eventual opening of Japanese casino in less than two years?

Would there be at least a faint commitment for economic diversification? How would it resolve income for the 51 percent earning poverty income level and below?

Would wishful spouts include a solid plan to improve wages and salaries that have been stagnant for the last 20 years? We shall see when the last word is uttered. One helluva journey ahead getting the ducks in order!

The road to economic revival and recovery is an arduous task. But we rely on the "solutions driven" team to provide real answers to the deepening familial economic hardship.

FACEBOOK

From Page 14

serving life sentences for blasphemy. Last week, three bloggers were arrested on blasphemy charges.

In Pakistan, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif calls blasphemy an "unpardonable offense."

Here, the unpardonable offense would be failing to push back against such backward thing. Facebook and Twitter should help to lead the push.

(c)2017 The Orange County Register (Santa Ana, Calif.)

TRUMP

From Page 14

suggested in his campaign.

"I would bomb the ... out of them," he said then, using profanity. "I'd blow up every single inch. There would be nothing left. And you know what? You'll get Exxon to come in there, and in two months ... they'll rebuild it brand new."

"And I'll take the oil," he added.

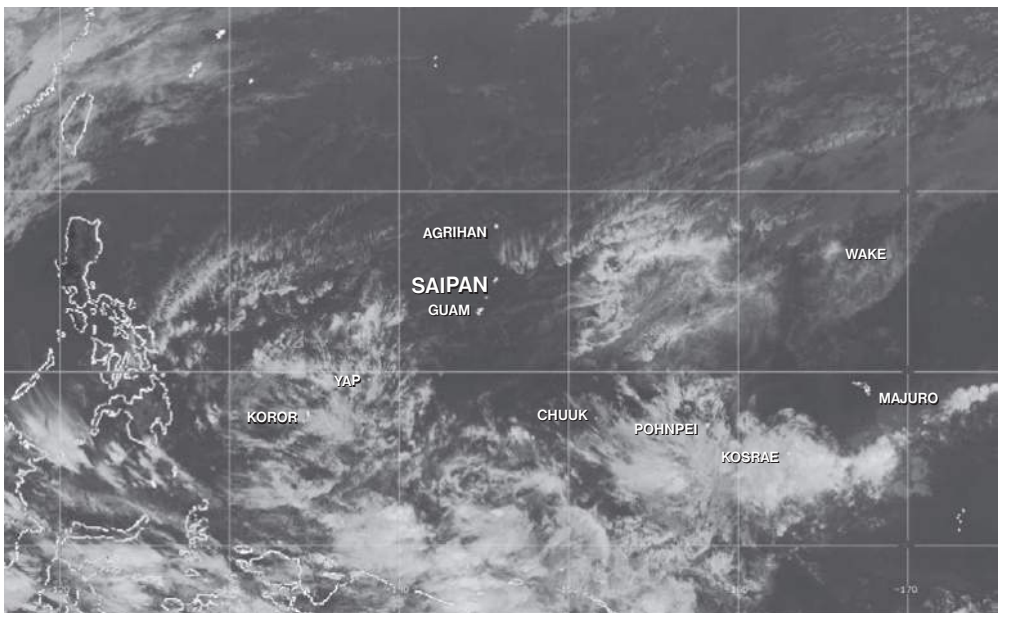
It won't be anywhere near that simple _ or that rewarding _ but if Trump listens to Mattis he might just achieve a goal that eluded his predecessor: pacifying Iraq and Syria.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Partly cloudy skies early followed by mostly cloudy skies and a few showers later at night.	Rain showers in the morning with scattered thunderstorms arriving in the afternoon.	Scattered clouds with the possibility of an isolated thunderstorm developing overnight.	Scattered thunderstorms.	Mixed clouds and sun with scattered thunderstorms.
▲83º ▼77º	▲84º ▼77º	▲85º ▼77º	▲85º ▼77º	▲85º ▼76º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:34 AM, THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 2017
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A shear line across the Marianas has kept a mostly cloudy sky over the area and brought some showers on Wednesday. A similar scenario is anticipated today. Moisture is confined to the lowest levels with dry air aloft. East wind of 15 to 20 mph is expected through tonight before decreasing. The small craft advisory will remain in effect with combined seas over 10 feet at Ritidian and Tanapag and over 7 feet at Ipan. North swell should increase to around 4 feet. Easterly will be at least 6 feet through Friday.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Mostly Cloudy	86 | 78 °F
Palau	Thunderstorms	86 | 78 °F
Yap	Mostly Cloudy	84 | 71 °F
Chuuk	Overcast	87 | 80 °F
Pohnpei	Mostly Cloudy	86 | 80 °F
Kosrae	Rain	85 | 79 °F
Majuro	Thunderstorms	80 | 79 °F

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	74 | 60 °F
Beijing	Sunny	63 | 42 °F
Hong Kong	Scattered Clouds	78 | 70 °F
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	84 | 72 °F
London	Partly Cloudy	59 | 45 °F
Los Angeles	Sunny	74 | 55 °F
Manila	Partly Cloudy	95 | 77 °F
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	64 | 49 °F
Miami	Sunny	82 | 71 °F
New York	Sunny	53 | 41 °F
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	65 | 46 °F
Paris	Sunny	72 | 52 °F
Pusan	Sunny	67 | 46 °F
Rome	Sunny	71 | 46 °F
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	56 | 42 °F
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	69 | 54 °F
Seoul	Sunny	61 | 42 °F
Tokyo	Sunny	63 | 46 °F
Washington, DC	Sunny	57 | 45 °F

NMI CRIME STOPPERS
Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:
- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
3:58 AM	LOW TIDE	0.56
9:34 AM	HIGH TIDE	2.01
4:25 PM	LOW TIDE	-0.11
10:48 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.94

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:13 AM	6:29 PM
Saturday	6:12 AM	6:29 PM
Sunday	6:11 AM	6:29 PM
Monday	6:11 AM	6:29 PM
Tuesday	6:10 AM	6:29 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	8:41 AM	9:39 PM	-
Saturday	9:34 AM	10:40 PM	-
Sunday	10:30 AM	11:41 PM	-
Monday	11:27 AM	-	-
Tuesday	-	12:39 AM	12:25 PM

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 25, 2017

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA6394	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA6392	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA6391	1:30pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7 via Rota
UA6390	2:20pm	3:10pm	2, 3, 6
UA6398	6:05pm	6:55pm	Daily
UA6396	9:50pm	10:40pm	Daily

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA6391	1:30pm	2:05pm	1, 4, 5, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA6391	2:35pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL297	4:15pm	7:05pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

TW308	2:35am	6:25am	Daily
OZ626	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
7C3403	4:35am	8:30am	Daily
LJ652	3:10pm	7:05pm	Daily
7C3401	4:30pm	8:25pm	Daily
ZE582	4:25pm	8:35pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

7C3451	2:55am	6:10am	1, 7
OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 7
7C3451	3:15am	6:30am	4, 5

SAIPAN-JEJU (CJU)

7C3433	3:55am	7:30am	3, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	5:20am	8:00am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	1:30am	6:50am	3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:30am	7:50am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/701	2:10am	10:50am	1 via ICN
OZ626/701	2:50am	10:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA6394/191	4:15am	9:00am	2, 3, 6, 7 via GUM
UA6394/PR111	4:15am	9:30am	Daily via GUM
UA6391/183	1:30pm	9:30pm	5 via Rota-GUM
UA6391/183	1:30pm	9:50pm	1, 4, 7 via Rota-GUM
UA6391/193	1:30pm	11:10pm	5 via Rota-GUM-ROR
UA6390/183	2:20pm	9:30pm	2 via GUM
UA6390/183	2:20pm	9:50pm	3, 6 via GUM
UA6390/193	2:20pm	11:10pm	2 via GUM-ROR

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

UO43	4:40am	8:10am	1, 3, 4, 6
HX077	2:15am	5:15am	1, 4
OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA6391/159	1:30pm	10:35pm	1, 5 via Rota-GUM
UA6390/159	2:20pm	10:35pm	3, 6 via GUM

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA6393	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA6395	7:15am	8:05am	Daily
UA6391	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA6390	12:10pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6 via Rota
UA6397	4:45pm	5:35pm	Daily
UA6399	8:30pm	9:20pm	Daily

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA6390	12:10pm	12:45pm	2, 3, 6

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA6390	1:15pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:25am	2:55pm	Daily

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

LJ651	8:25am	1:45pm	Daily
ZE581	10:15am	3:35pm	Daily
7C3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ625	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
TW307	8:15pm	1:35am+1	Daily
OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
7C3404	10:10pm	3:30am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

7C3452	8:30pm	1:20am+1	6, 7
OZ607	9:00pm	1:50am+1	3, 6
7C3452	9:35pm	2:15am+1	3, 4

JEJU (CJU)-SAIPAN

7C3434	10:05pm	2:40am+1	2, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:20pm	4:30am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	4:40pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:50pm	2:40am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA190/6397	9:55am	5:35pm	2, 3, 6, 7 via GUM
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/UA6395	10:05pm	8:05am+1	Daily via GUM
UA192/6395	10:20pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via ROR-GUM
UA184/6395	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/6395	11:55pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
HX076	5:50pm	12:45am+1	3, 7
UO42	4:50pm	12:05am+1	2, 6
UO42	6:05pm	1:10am+1	1
UO42	6:10pm	1:10am+1	4
UA116/6395	9:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U Sichuan Airlines, 7C Jeju Air, DL Delta Airlines, UO HK Express, HX HongKong Airlines, LJ Jin Air, MU China Eastern, OZ Asiana Airlines, TW t'way Air, UA United Airlines, ZE Eastar Jet, PR PAL Express; ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The* Saipan Tribune *is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
6:30AM	6:45AM	Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
12:30NN	12:45NN	Daily
1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
12:00NN	12:15NN	Daily
1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:45AM	8:15AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:00PM	4:30PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:45PM	5:15PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

Parent Summit

Photos by ERWIN ENCINARES

Rep. Vinson Sablan (Ind-Saipan) sits down with parents during the 2017 Public School System Statewide Parent Summit at the Saipan World Resort last Wednesday.

Rep. Lorenzo Deleon Guerrero (Ind-Saipan) listens to parents during the 2017 Public School System Statewide Parent Summit at the Saipan World Resort last Wednesday.

Marianas High School vice principal Bobby Cruz hears the comments of parents during the work session of the 2017 Public School System Statewide Parent Summit last Wednesday at the Saipan World Resort.

Marianas High School P.E. teacher Nick Gross participate in the work session of the 2017 Public School System Statewide Parent Summit last Wednesday at the Saipan World Resort.

Francisco M. Sablan Middle School principal James Sablan takes part in the work session at the 2017 Public School System Statewide Parent Summit last Wednesday at the Saipan World Resort.

Representatives of Tinian discuss school affairs during the work session of the 2017 Public School System Statewide Parent Summit last Wednesday at the Saipan World Resort.

COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
2nd Floor CDA Bldg,m Oleai, Saipan P.O. Box 502149, Saipan MP 96950
Tel.: (670) 234-6245/6293/7145/7146 • Fax: (670) 235-7147
Website: www.developcnmi.com

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

POSITION VACANCY: Accounting & Loan Technician I, Classified Position
LOCATION: Saipan Office
ANNUAL SALARY: $13,703.64 - $22,302.94
CLOSING DATE: **Thursday, April 11, 2017**

NATURE OF WORK
This position requires a person who is detailed and has an eye for compliance requirements. It involves multiple and moderately complex duties in providing senior staffers in accounting and loan departments in a variety of responsibilities.

GENERAL DUTIES:
Loan Department:
- Assists with preparation of loan notes documents and processes.
- Assists with compiling data for various loan department reports including data entry.
- Assists with internal loan status tracking system.
- Assists with tracking and maintaining UCC filings; the inventory of real estate collaterals; various loan files for both private lenders and CDA direct lending programs.
- Assists with maintaining correspondence logs.

Accounting Department:
- Receives payments.
- Collects payments daily from the Drop Box.
- Processes pre-authorized credit card payments.
- Inputs payment details and issues receipts.
- Assists with preparation of bank deposits.

Performs related work as assigned.

QUALIFICATION and OTHER REQUIREMENTS / SKILLS
Graduation from High School, GED or Advanced Development Institute plus three (3) years of experience in maintaining a variety of financial records. Knowledge of modern office practices and modern office equipment; Knowledge of MS Office word processing and spreadsheet applications; Ability to express oneself effectively, orally and in writing; and have excellent organizational skills.

Detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information may be picked up, together with an employment application form, during regular working hours at the CDA Office in Oleai, Saipan.

Applicants are requested to submit their application and supporting documents to the Office of Personnel Management.

For inquiries, please contact Ms. Christy Kintol, Office Manager at (670) 234-6245 extension 310 or by e-mail at c.kintol@developcnmi.com.

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Website: www.developcnmi.com

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

POSITION VACANCY: Administrative Specialist II, Classified Position
LOCATION: Tinian Office
ANNUAL SALARY: $16,858.38 - $20,484.60
CLOSING DATE: **Thursday, April 11, 2017**

NATURE OF WORK
The position is under the supervision of the Office Manager, Saipan. The individual works in conjunction with Saipan personnel and require coordination with the various departments in order to accomplish a variety of responsibilities. This position is tasked with promoting CDA's mission in Tinian. The position has some degree of independence such as the management of daily activities-revising workflow to suit the agency.

GENERAL DUTIES:
- Issues loan applications and explains basic application requirements.
- Organizes and coordinates CDA related functions and events.
- Organizes and coordinates deliveries and pick-ups and routes necessary documents for Board signature.
- Prepares and submits monthly activity report to Administration, Saipan.
- Receives and receipts all payments.
- Prepares and deposits collections on a daily basis.
- Prepares daily collection report and submits to Accounting Dept, Saipan.
- Submits daily receipts on a monthly basis to Accounting Dept. Saipan.
- Performs related work as assigned.

QUALIFICATION and OTHER REQUIREMENTS / SKILLS
Any combination equivalent to graduation from an accredited college or university with a BA Degree in Business Administration or related field; plus (2) years of experience in office management or staff. Knowledge of modern office practices and modern office equipment; Knowledge of MS Office word processing and spreadsheet applications; Ability to express oneself effectively, orally and in writing; and have excellent organizational skills.

Detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information may be picked up, together with an employment application form, during regular working hours at the NMHC/CDA Office in Tinian.

Applicants are requested to submit their application and supporting documents to the Office of Personnel Management in Tinian.

For inquiries, please contact Ms. Christy Kintol, Office Manager at (670) 234-6245 extension 310 or by e-mail at c.kintol@developcnmi.com.

MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

It is the policy of the Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA) to limit hiring to qualified US workers, as restricted by CNMI law, and that equal opportunity be given to all qualified US worker applicants regardless of age, sex or sexual orientation, religion, marital status, political status, veterans status, disability or place of origin.

Opening Date: 03/20/17 Closing Date: 04/03/17*
JVA#17-003: Community Projects Coordinator II
Annual Salary: $25,791.92 - $27,081.51**
Location: Marianas Visitors Authority, Saipan

JVA#17-004: Marketing Specialist I
Annual Salary: $23,394.02 - $24,563.73**
Location: Marianas Visitors Authority, Saipan

JVA#17-007: Administrative Assistant
Annual Salary: $18,329.83 - $25,791.92**
Location: Marianas Visitors Authority, Saipan

Opening Date: 03/31/17 Closing Date: 04/13/17*
JVA#17-006: Special Assistant to the Managing Director
Annual Salary: $25,000.00 to $35,000.00** UNGRADED
Location: Marianas Visitors Authority, Saipan

JVA#17-008: Statistics Specialist I
Annual Salary: $23,394.03 to $24,563.73
Location: Marianas Visitors Authority, Saipan

JVA#17-009: Chief Accountant
Annual Salary: $45,000.00 - $60,000.00 ** UNGRADED
Location: Marianas Visitors Authority, Saipan

** **The salary given will be determined by the qualifications of the appointee.**

*If not filled, the vacancy announcement will be continued and applications will be reviewed every two weeks thereafter until the search is closed. Deadlines that fall on a non-business day will be extended to the next business day.

Interested persons may contact the Marianas Visitors Authority Office at (670) 664-3200/01 for more detailed information on position description. A completed application must be submitted together with the required documents for consideration until search is closed. A resume may be attached, but the application form must be filled out in full. MVA is an equal opportunity employer.

Early Head Start representatives were also present at the 2017 Public School System Statewide Parent Summit last Wednesday at the Saipan World Resort.

Associate Commissioner Yvonne Pangelinan sits in during the 2017 Public School System Statewide Parent Summit last Wednesday at the Saipan World Resort.

Education Commissioner Cynthia Deleon Guerrero drops by a table of parents as discussions occur at the 2017 Public School System Statewide Parent Summit last Wednesday at the Saipan World Resort.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
Tel. (670) 234-6866/234-9447/234-7689/234-7670 - Fax. (670) 234-9021 Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Board of Directors, through its Chairman of the Board, is hereby giving notice that the Special Board Meeting is scheduled on Wednesday, April 5, 2017 – 9:00 a.m. at the NMHC Conference Room, Garapan, Saipan. The public is welcome to submit written or oral comments regarding the agenda below. Individuals interested in attending the meeting and needing special accommodations are requested to contact NMHC in advance.

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
- a. Call to Order
- b. Roll Call
- c. Adoption of Agenda
- d. Adoption of Minutes
  - i. Regular Board Meeting – February 8, 2017 / Resumed Regular Board Meeting – February 21, 2017

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

III. CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

IV. OLD BUSINESS

V. NEW BUSINESS
- a. FY 2018 Budget

VI. LEGAL COUNSEL'S PENDING/ONGOING REPORT

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

VIII. OTHER MATTERS

IX. ADJOURNMENT

(*Note: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13(a) (7) and Section 13(c), the Board may vote to meet in executive session.)*

/s/
IGNACIO L. PEREZ
Chairman of the Board

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB17-DPS-119
SUBMISSION DATE: APRIL 28, 2017 TIME: 10:30A.M.

"PURCHASE OF A CLASS "I" VEHICLE FOR THE DEPARMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY"

COPIES OF THE SCOPPE OF WORK MAY BE PICKED UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE COMMONWEALTH RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS AND PROPOSALS; IN WHOLE OR IN PART. AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTION IN A BID IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLADNS. ALL BIDS SHALL BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ ROBERT A GUERRERO
COMMISSIONER OF DPS

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR OF P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB17-DPS-111
SUBMISSION DATE: APRIL 28, 2017 TIME: 9:00A.M.

"PURCHASE OF A 21" JET BOAT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY"

COPIES OF THE SCOPPE OF WORK MAY BE PICKED UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, **LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN** DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

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/S/ ROBERT A GUERRERO
COMMISSIONER OF DPS

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
3rd Floor, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building
P.O. Box 501220 CK Saipan, MP 96950-1220
Telephone: (670) 664-4282
Facsimile: (670) 235-5131

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to the Open Government Act (1 CMC §9901 et seq), the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation Board of Directors hereby informs the general public that the Personnel Committee will meet on Tuesday, April 4, 2017, at 12:00 noon The meeting will be held at the CUC Conference Room, Room 17, 3rd Floor, Joeten Dandan Building. The following agenda will be considered and public attendance is welcome.

AGENDA*

I. Preliminary Matters
- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Adoption of Agenda

II. Public Comments**

III. Executive Session***
(Discuss and confer with the Legal Counsel on personnel and legal matters)

IV. Adjournment

* Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Agenda may be modified during the meeting.
** Public comments are limited to 30 minutes and each remark is limited to three minutes. Everyone is welcome to submit written comments.
*** Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Committee members may vote to meet in executive session at any time.

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
3rd Floor, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building
P.O. Box 501220 CK Saipan, MP 96950-1220
Telephone: (670) 664-4282
Facsimile: (670) 235-5131

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Commonwealth Utilities Corporation ("CUC") Board of Directors' Operations Committee will meet on Wednesday, April 5, 2017, at 10:00 a.m. at the CUC Conference Room, Room 17, 3rd Floor, Joeten Dandan Building.

AGENDA*

I. Preliminary Matters
- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Adoption of Agenda

II. Public Comments**

III. Executive Session***
(Consultation with Legal Counsel on legal matters pertaining to Operations)

IV. Adjournment

* Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Agenda may be modified during the meeting.
** Public comments are limited to 30 minutes and each remark is limited to three minutes. Everyone is welcome to submit written comments.
*** Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Committee members may vote to meet in executive session at any time.

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL A...
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 9...50
Phone: (670) 237-6500 • Fax: (670) ...-5962
E-mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Websi...w.cpa.gov...p

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AUCTION DATE: MARCH 31, 20... TIM... 2:00 P.M.

LOCATION: COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY SEAPORT BUILDING PREMISE

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AUCTION IS OPEN TO ALL BIDDERS

FOR ...E COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Date: _____

CANCELLED

Marianas Health provides quality volunteer care

Physical therapist Ronaldo Pagsuyuin stretches a runner with cramps at the Ironman 70.3 that took place at Pau Pau Beach on March 11, 2017.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Marianas Health staff is joined by their physical therapist, physical therapist technicians, and home care nurses, the NMC Nursing Club, and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. nurses at the XTERRA Saipan on March 18, 2017.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

March was filled with events for athletes from around the world. From the Ironman triathlon that took place on March 11, to the XTERRA on March 18 and the Saipan Marathon on March 25, Marianas Health was there to give a helping hand.

Ronaldo Pagsuyuin, a physical therapist together, with Anadea Pagsuyuin and Aljay Figueroa, both physical therapy technicians from Marianas Health, assisted athletes who came through the finish line with injuries, most of which were leg cramps and sprains.

Athletes who came in with wounds and dehydration were assisted by the nurses from the home care department of Marianas Health, members of the Nursing Club at the Northern Marianas College, and nurses of the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

"The athletes came in with mostly leg cramps and as we were able to stretch them, we also provided education on how to prevent another one from recurring. Most of them would put ice on the spot of the cramp, which is not recommended because it would tighten the muscle even more and would constrict blood flow. We advised them that massaging and stretching are the best remedies to alleviate it," said Pagsuyuin.

Marianas Health has been involved in many community events for several years now, some of which are the XTERRA and the American Red Cross Walk-A-Thon, providing quality care not only to their patients but also through volunteerism. ***(PR)***

◀ Physical therapy technician Aljay Figueroa stretches a cramped runner at the Saipan Marathon on March 25, 2017.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB17-DPW/SWMD-115

SUBMISSION DATE: APRIL 28, 2017 TIME: 9:30A.M.

"PURCHASE OF A LANDSCAPING TRUCK 4X4 (FOUR (4) FULL DOORS) WITH HYDRAULIC LIFT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DIVISION"

COPIES OF THE SCOPPE OF WORK MAY BE PICKED UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE COMMONWEALTH RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS AND PROPOSALS; IN WHOLE OR IN PART. AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTION IN A BID IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLADNS. ALL BIDS SHALL BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JAMES A. ADA
SECRETARY OF PUBLIC WORKS

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR OF P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB17-HSEM-122

SUBMISSION DATE: APRIL 28, 2017 TIME: 10:30A.M.

"PURCHASE OF TWO (2) CLASS "I" VEHICLE FOR THE OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY"

COPIES OF THE SCOPPE OF WORK MAY BE PICKED UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE COMMONWEALTH RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS AND PROPOSALS; IN WHOLE OR IN PART. AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTION IN A BID IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLADNS. ALL BIDS SHALL BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ GERALD J. DELEON GUERRERO
SPECIAL ASSISTANT, HOMELAND SECURITY
& EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB17-SAR-116

SUBMISSION DATE: APRIL 28, 2017 TIME: 10:00A.M.

"PURCHASE OF A JOHN DEERE GATOR XUV560 S4 FOR THE OFFICE OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE & REHABILITATION"

COPIES OF THE SCOPPE OF WORK MAY BE PICKED UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE COMMONWEALTH RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS AND PROPOSALS; IN WHOLE OR IN PART. AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTION IN A BID IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLADNS. ALL BIDS SHALL BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ YVETTE R. SABLAN
SPECIAL ASSISTANT, SUBSTANCE ABUSE
& REHABILITATION

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR OF P&S

JP World Corporation

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Business

Ford recalls 570K vehicles for fire risk, door latch trouble

DETROIT (AP)—Ford is recalling more than 570,000 vehicles in North America and Europe to fix separate problems that can cause engine fires and doors to fly open unexpectedly.

The recalls will hit the company's bottom line in the first quarter of this year. Ford said in a Wednesday filing with securities regulators that the recalls will cut pretax earnings by $295 million.

The engine fire recall covers over 360,000 vehicles in North America and Europe. In North America it includes Escape SUVs from the 2014 model year, plus the 2014 and 2015 compact Fiesta ST, the 2013 and 2014 Fusion midsize car and the 2013 through 2015 Transit Connect small van. In Europe, the recall covers the 2010 through 2015 C-Max hybrid and Focus small car, and the 2013 through 2015 Transit Connect van. All the vehicles have 1.6-Liter four-cylinder turbocharged engines.

A lack of coolant circulation could cause the engine to overheat, causing a crack in the cylinder head, according to Ford. If that happens, pressurized oil can leak through the crack, and if it hits a hot surface, could cause and engine fire. The company says it has 29 reports of fires in the U.S. and Canada, but no injuries.

Owners can continue to drive the vehicles safely and park them in garages or other structures, spokeswoman Elizabeth Weigandt said. The company will mail customers instructions from the owner's manual on how to check and refill coolant. Dealers also will check coolant levels for owners. If vehicles leak coolant or overheat, they should be taken to a dealer, Weigandt said.

If parts are available, dealers will install a coolant level sensor and a warning light on the dashboard telling owners if the coolant level is low, Weigandt said. She did not know if the company will fix coolant leaks, but said she would check.

The company also is adding 211,000 vehicles to a 2015 recall to replace faulty door latches. That recall covers the 2014 Fiesta and the 2013 and 2014 Fusion and Lincoln MKZ. The expansion brings the total from the 2015 recall to nearly 757,000.

Door latches have been a major problem for Ford vehicles during the past three years, resulting in investigations by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and recalls of over 3 million vehicles.

The company recalled more than 2.3 million vehicles last fall because their door latches weren't working properly. That recall included the 2012-2015 Ford Focus and the 2013-2015 Ford Escape and C-Max.

Poll: Americans dislike GOP's, Trump's plan on health care

Trump

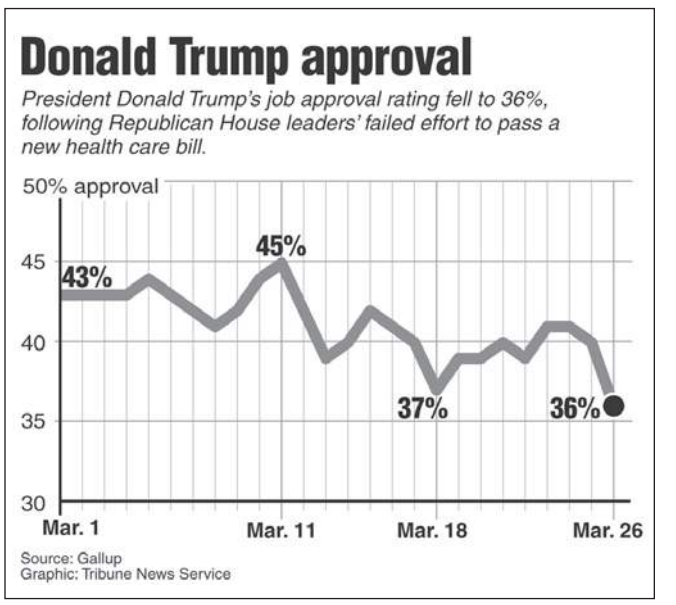
WASHINGTON (AP)—Note to President Donald Trump and House Republicans: People really don't like your approach to overhauling America's health care. If you're hoping to revive the effort, you may want to try something different.

Sixty-two percent of Americans turned thumbs down on Trump's handling of health care during the initial weeks of his presidency, according to a poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research released Wednesday. It was his worst rating among seven issues the poll tested, including the economy, foreign policy and immigration.

Of six changes the failed House GOP bill would have made to President Barack Obama's law, five drew more negative than positive reviews.

An overwhelming 8 in 10 opposed the Republican proposal to let insurers boost premiums on older people. Seven in 10 disapproved of premium surcharges for people whose coverage lapses.

By wide margins, people also disliked proposed cuts in Medicaid, which helps lower-earning people cover medical costs, a halt in federal payments to Planned Parenthood and a transformation of the Obama law's subsidies—based on income and premium costs—into aid linked to age.



"His campaign promise was great health care for everyone, for all Americans at great prices," said Raymond Brown, 64, a Republican and retired truck driver from Rio Grande, New Jersey. "He isn't fulfilling his campaign promise."

Overall, just over half in the poll said they worry many Americans would have lost coverage had the GOP bill become law. Would their own families and average Americans have been better or worse off? More said worse.

The results underscore that annulling Obama's statute is not an issue to be trifled with. More people support than oppose that law by 45 percent to 38 percent, a slightly narrower margin than in January. And a slender majority say covering all Americans is a federal responsibility—a view embraced by Democrats but not Republicans, who instead focus on access and lower premiums.

The survey was conducted over five days preceding and following last Friday's withdrawal of the GOP health care bill. Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., short-circuited a House vote that would have spelled defeat for the Republican legislation because of opposition from conservative and moderate Republicans. It was a mortifying setback for Trump and his party.

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Nation

Judge in Hawaii extends order blocking Trump's travel ban

HONOLULU (AP)—A federal judge in Hawaii decided Wednesday to extend his order blocking President Donald Trump's travel ban.

U.S. District Judge Derrick Watson issued the longer-lasting hold on the ban just hours after hearing arguments.

Hawaii says the policy discriminates against Muslims and hurts the state's tourist-dependent economy. The implied message in the revised ban is like a "neon sign flashing 'Muslim ban, Muslim ban'" that the government didn't bother to turn off, state Attorney General Douglas Chin told the judge.

Extending the temporary order until the state's lawsuit was resolved would ensure the constitutional rights of Muslim citizens across the U.S. are vindicated after "repeated stops and starts of the last two months," the state has said.

The government says the ban falls within the president's power to protect national security. Hawaii has only made generalized concerns about its effect on students and tourism, Department of Justice attorney Chad Readler told the judge via telephone.

The Trump administration had asked Watson to narrow his ruling to cover only the part of Trump's executive order that suspends new visas for people from six Muslim-majority countries. Readler said a freeze on the U.S. refugee program had no effect on Hawaii.

Watson rejected that argument, preventing the administration from halting the flow of refugees.

Watson said in court that the government only argued for that narrower interpretation after a federal judge in Maryland blocked the six-nation travel ban but said it wasn't clear that the refugee suspension was similarly motivated by religious bias.

Watson noted that the government said 20 refugees were resettled in Hawaii since 2010.

"Is this a mathematical exercise that 20 isn't enough? ... What do I make of that?" the judge asked Readler.

The government attorney replied that 20 is simply a small number of refugees.

"In whose judgment?" Watson asked.

Hawaii was the first state to sue over Trump's revised ban. The imam of a Honolulu mosque joined the challenge, arguing that the ban would prevent his Syrian mother-in-law from visiting family in Hawaii.

In his arguments, Chin quoted Trump's comments that the revised travel ban is a "watered down" version of the original.

"We cannot fault the president for being politically incorrect, but we do fault him for being constitutionally incorrect," Chin said.

Earlier this month, Watson prevented the federal government from suspending new visas for people from Somalia, Iran, Syria, Sudan, Libya and Yemen and freezing the nation's refugee program. His ruling came just hours before the federal government planned to start enforcing Trump's executive order.

Hawaii Attorney General Douglas Chin speaks outside federal court in Honolulu, Wednesday, March 29, 2017. AP

Senate intelligence leaders vow cooperation in Russia inquiry

WASHINGTON (AP)—Pledging cooperation, the top Republican and Democrat on the Senate intelligence committee said Wednesday they would steer clear of politics in their panel's probe of Russian interference in last year's election. They made a point of putting themselves at arm's length from the House investigation marked by partisanship and disputes.

Richard Burr of North Carolina, the GOP chairman of the Senate committee, told reporters on Capitol Hill he would not even answer questions about the House probe. "We're not asking the House to play any role in our investigation. We don't plan to play any role in their investigation," Burr said ahead of his panel's open hearing Thursday.

Standing alongside his committee' ranking Democrat, Sen. Mark Warner of Virginia, Burr said: "Mark and I work hand in hand on this. ... We're partners to see that this is completed and that we have a product at the end of the day that we can, in bipartisanship, support."

The senators' comments came the same day an attorney for former National Security Adviser Michael Flynn said the retired U.S. Army lieutenant general has not been interviewed by the Senate intelligence committee. One of Flynn's lawyers, Robert K. Kelner, said they have had discussions with committee staff members, but Flynn has not been contacted directly.

The family of the late
†Zenaida Mae Castro Javier
Would like to invite all our families, relatives and friends to join us in prayer as we commemorate the
First Death Anniversary
of our beloved's passing unto eternal life.
Daily rosary and mass will be celebrated
as follows at the San Jose Church, Saipan
Monday, April 3rd, 2017 - Rosary at 7:00pm
Tuesday, April 4th, 2017 - Mass at 6:00am / Rosary at 7:00pm
Wednesday, April 5th, 2017 - Mass at 6:00pm / Rosary at 7:00pm
Thursday, April 6th, 2017 - Mass at 6:00am / Rosary at 7:00pm
Friday, April 7th, 2017 - Mass at 6:00am / Rosary at 7:00pm
Saturday, April 8th, 2017 - Mass at 6:00pm / Rosary at 7:00pm
Sunday, April 9th, 2017 - Mass at 7:30am / Rosary at 7:00pm
Monday, April 10th, 2017 - Mass at 6:00am / Rosary at 7:00pm
Tuesday, April 11th, 2017 - Rosary at 5:30pm / Mass at 6:00pm
On the final day, April 11th, 2017, dinner will be served immediately after the mass at the San Jose Church Social Hall.
"In the end, she became more than what she expected. She became the journey, And like all journeys, She did not end, she just Simply changed directions And kept going."
r.m. drake
Your thoughts, presence and most especially your prayers are sincerely appreciated.
Thank you and Si Yu'us Ma'ase

NTSB to begin probe of Texas bus-truck crash that killed 13

UVALDE, Texas (AP)—Federal investigators are getting their first look Thursday at the scene of a head-on collision involving a small church bus and a pickup truck that killed 13 senior adult church members onboard the bus.

The Texas Department of Public Safety reported the lone bus survivor remains hospitalized in critical condition, and the pickup truck driver is in stable condition.

The National Transportation Safety Board sent investigators to the scene to begin seeking the cause of the crash, NTSB spokesman Terry Williams said Wednesday.

Twelve bus occupants, including the driver, were dead at the scene of Wednesday's crash, DPS Lt. Johnny Hernandez said. One bus passenger died later at a San Antonio hospital.

The wreck happened about 12:30 p.m. on U.S. 83, a two-lane highway, outside Garner State Park in northern Uvalde County. The area is about 75 miles (120.7 km) west of San Antonio.

It was not immediately clear what caused the collision about 120 miles (193.1 km) from the church, where the members were headed.

Photos and video of the crash's aftermath showed heavy damage to the front drivers' sides of both vehicles where it appeared the two had collided. The back of the bus was up on a guardrail, with glass and debris scattered onto the grass below.

Hein said the small bus was a 2004 Turtle Top, though he did not know the specific model. Turtle Top's website features shuttle buses with capacities ranging from 17 to 51 passengers, which they bill as "a great alternative to the standard 15-passenger van." Safety concerns have long surrounded the 15-passenger vans, also frequently used by churches and other groups, with advocates saying they can be difficult to control in an emergency.

Church officials said in a statement on the First Baptist website that the members were returning from a three-day retreat at the Alto Frio Baptist Encampment in Leakey, about 9 miles (14.5 km) north of where the crash happened.

The church officials were "ministering to family members to help them deal with this tragedy," according to the statement. Counselors also were scheduled to be available Thursday at the church.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott and his wife, Cecilia, offered their condolences in the hours after the crash.

"We are saddened by the loss of life and our hearts go out to all those affected," their statement said. "We thank the first responders working on the scene in the wake of this unimaginable tragedy, and ask that all Texans join us in offering their thoughts and prayers."

Authorities investigate after a deadly crash involving a van carrying church members and a pickup truck on U.S. 83 outside Garner State Park in northern Uvalde County, Texas, Wednesday, March 29, 2017. AP

AMENDED PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9910(a), the Fifteenth CNMI State Board of Education hereby gives notice that there will be a Special Board Meeting on Friday, March 31, 2017 at 1:00 p.m. at the Office of the Commissioner of Education Conference Room, Building 1211, Capitol Hill, Saipan.

AGENDA[1]

I. **Preliminary**
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Adoption of Minautes
   a. February 23, 2017 Special Board Meeting

II. **Public Comments[2]**

III. **Reports**
1. Chair
2. Board Committees
   a. CIP
   b. FPA
   c. SARC
   d. SICPP
3. Commissioner of Education
   a. Financial Status Reports
      i. Federal
      ii. Local
   b. Head Start Program
   c. Others

IV. **Unfinished Business**
1. Proposed FTE
   a. EEO Investigator-LCO
2. Repeal of PSS Child Care Program Rules and Regulations
3. School Calendar for SY 2017-2018
   a. K-12
   b. Early Intervention Program
4. Revised Organizational Chart

V. **New Business**
1. Updates
   a. FY'16 Audit Status Report
   b. PSS Website
   c. Annual Reports PSS 2015-2016
2. NMTI MOU with PSS
3. Ratifications:
   a. Proclamation of March as Anti-Bullying Month
   b. Proclamation of April as Library Month
   c. BOE-PSS Comments to HB 20-10 and 20-15
   d. BOE-PSS Comments to SB 20-03
   e. BOE-PSS Comments to SB 20-04 and 20-05
   f. BOE-PSS Comments to SB 20-09
   g. Resolution 2017-001 Bank Signatory Update
   h. Resolution 2017-002 Additional Bank Signatory
4. Proposed Regulation Amendments:
   a. Regulation 60-40-120 Procurement & Supply – Small Purchases
   b. Regulation 60-40-251 Procurement & Supply – Change Order
5. Special Education Program – Annual State Grant Application – Part B (2017)
6. Early Intervention Program - Annual State Grant Application - Part C (2017)
7. Head Start/Early Head Start Program
   a. Revised Organizational Chart
   b. SY 2016-2017 Program Self-Assessment Report
   c. SY 2016-2017 Community Assessment Report
   d. SY 2017-2018 Selection Criteria
   e. SY 2017-2018 Proposed School Calendars
      i. Head Start Full Day
      ii. Head Start Part Day
      iii. Early Head Start
8. Goals and Objectives
9. Certification and Licensure Matters
   a. CLO Report No. 2017-003
   b. CLO Report No. 2017-004

VI. **Executive Session[3]**
1. Legal Updates
2. Personnel/Certification
3. Other matters

VII. **Discussion of Agenda for next Board meeting**

VIII. **Adjournment**

[1] In the event that the items on the agenda are not completed, the meeting will recess and reconvene on the following day or at the most expeditious date and time determined by the Board.
[2] Pursuant to BOE Policy 0415, public comments are limited to 30 minutes. We ask that remarks be limited to 3 minutes each. Everyone is welcomed to submit written comments.
[3] Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Board may vote to meet in executive session at any time.

Pedestrian deaths spiked in 2016, distraction cited

WASHINGTON (AP)—Pedestrian deaths are climbing faster than motorist fatalities, reaching nearly 6,000 deaths last year—the highest total in more than two decades, according to an analysis of preliminary state data released Thursday.

Increased driving due to an improved economy, lower gas prices and more walking for exercise and environmental reasons are some of the likely reasons behind the estimated 11 percent spike in pedestrian fatalities in 2016. The figures were prepared for the Governors Highway Safety Association, which represents state highway safety offices.

But researchers say they think the biggest factor may be more drivers and walkers distracted by cellphones and other electronic devices, although that's hard to confirm.

Walking and miles driven are up only a few percentage points, and are unlikely to account for most of the surge in pedestrian deaths, said Richard Retting, safety director for Sam Schwartz Transportation Consultants and the author of the report. Meanwhile, texting and use of 1wireless devices have exploded, he said.

"It's the only factor that that seems to indicate a dramatic change in how people behave," Retting said.

The report is based on data from all states and the District of Columbia for the first six months of 2016 and extrapolated for the rest of the year. It shows the largest annual increase in both the number and percentage of pedestrian fatalities in the more than 40 years those national records on such deaths have been kept, with the second largest increase occurring in 2015. Pedestrian deaths as a share of total motor vehicle crash deaths increased from 11 percent in 2006 to 15 percent in 2015.

Severe storms threaten central US; trucker dies in Oklahoma

SPUR, Texas (AP)—A storm system blamed for the death of a truck driver in Oklahoma barreled eastward Wednesday, generating a tornado in Houston and threatening additional bad weather in the central United States.

The day after three storm chasers died in a collision as they raced toward a tornado-warned storm in West Texas, the Storm Prediction Center said 17 million people from Missouri to Louisiana risked seeing twisters, hail and high winds on Wednesday. An even greater threat exists Thursday in northern Mississippi and western Tennessee.

The National Weather Service said a tornado with winds between 60 and 110 mph (100-175 kph) struck an apartment complex in southwestern Houston on Wednesday morning, damaging carports, windows and roofs. No injuries were reported following the tornado, rated as an EF-0 or an EF-1 on a six-level scale of tornado damage. Later Wednesday, damaging winds knocked a shipping container on a truck, injuring two near LaPorte, 20 miles (32 km) east of Houston. The Port of Houston said it didn't know if a tornado was to blame.

Asia

S Korea's Park questioned at court hearing on arrest request

AP
Ousted South Korean President Park Geun-hye, second from left, arrives at the Seoul Central District Court for hearing on a prosecutors' request for her arrest for corruption, in Seoul, South Korea, Thursday, March 30, 2017.

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korea's disgraced ex-President Park Geun-hye was being questioned Thursday by a court that will decide if she should be arrested over corruption allegations that have already toppled her from power.

Live TV footage earlier showed a stern looking Park entering the Seoul Central District Court building amid a barrage of camera flashes. She did not comment to reporters. The court is expected to decide by Friday morning whether to approve her arrest.

If the court approves the arrest warrant requested by prosecutors, Park will be immediately sent to a detention facility as prosecutors can detain her for up to 20 days before laying formal charges.

If the court rejects the arrest request, prosecutors can still indict and charge her.

Prosecutors accuse Park of colluding with a confidante to extort from big businesses, take a bribe from one of the companies and commit other wrongdoings. The allegations prompted millions of South Koreans to stage streets protests every weekend for months before the Constitutional Court ruled to dismiss her on March 10. Park's presidential powers had already been suspended after parliament impeached her in December.

It was a dramatic setback to Park, South Korea's first female president who rose to power four years ago amid conservatives' nostalgia for her late dictator father who is credited by supporters for pulling a war-torn country out of poverty in the 1960-70s. Liberal critics revile her father as a ruthless leader who tortured and imprisoned his opponents.

Earlier Thursday, hundreds of her supporters, mostly elderly conservative citizens, gathered near her Seoul home, waving national flags and chanting slogans when she left for the court.

Prosecutors say they want to arrest Park because her alleged crimes are "grave" and other suspects involved the scandal, including her confidante Choi Soo-sil, have already been arrested.

In the coming weeks, prosecutors are expected to formally charge Park with extortion, bribery and abuse of power. A bribery conviction alone is punishable by up to life in prison in South Korea.

Park and Choi deny most of the allegations. Park has said she only let Choi edit some of her presidential speeches and got her help on "public relations" issues. Choi made similar statements.

The women, both in their 60s, have been friends for 40 years. Park once described Choi as someone who helped her when she had "difficulties," an apparent reference to her parents' assassinations in the 1970s. Park's father Chung-hee was gunned down by his own intelligence chief in 1979, five years after his wife was killed in an assassination attempt that targeted him. Park Geun-hye served as first lady after her mother's death.

Indonesia man swallowed by python, villagers and reports say

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—A 25-year-old Indonesian man has been swallowed whole by a python on the island of Sulawesi, villagers and news reports said.

A six-minute video on the website of the Tribun Timur publication shows villagers slicing open the python's carcass to reveal the legs and torso of the dead victim, named Akbar.

Junaedi, the secretary of Salubiro village in West Sulawesi province, told The Associated Press that villagers began searching for Akbar on Monday night after realizing he hadn't returned from working on his palm oil crops the previous day.

Junaedi said Wednesday that the search party found scattered palm oil fruit, a picking tool and a boot, and then spotted the engorged 7-meter (23-foot) -long reticulated python.

"When its stomach was cut, we first saw his boot and legs near the neck," he said. "It seems he was attacked from behind because we found a wound on his back."

Reticulated pythons grab onto their prey with dozens of sharp curved teeth and then squeeze it to death before swallowing it whole. They are widespread in Indonesia and other parts of Southeast Asia.

Reports of humans being killed by pythons are extremely rare. In the wild they are known to eat monkeys, pigs and other mammals.

Junaedi said Akbar's absence wasn't noticed until Monday because his wife was visiting her parents in another province. The alarm was raised when his uncle called on him and found his house locked.

Like many Indonesians, Junaedi uses one name, as did Akbar.

Mobs attack Africans in India after a local boy went missing

NEW DELHI (AP)—Mobs have repeatedly attacked Africans in a New Delhi suburb in recent days after rumors that a local boy had been kidnapped by Nigerians.

The surge in violence began Friday when a teenage boy disappeared in Greater Noida, outside New Delhi, and angry relatives claimed he'd been killed by Nigerians. A mob of people began searching the area for Africans, with some accusing kidnappers of eating the boy.

The boy returned home Saturday morning. He died later that day, though the cause remains unclear.

The police arrested five Nigerian men and charged them with kidnapping and murder but let them go within hours, citing lack of evidence.

Sujata Singh, a top local police official, told reporters over the weekend that the police simply had no evidence at all to hold the men.

But mobs continued to attack Africans, the most recent attack was Wednesday, leaving at least two people with broken bones. Africans have been chased by a mob into a local mall and beaten there. There have been reports of crowds pulling African men and women out of autorickshaws and cabs and assaulting them.

The African Students' Association in the country has asked Africans across the capital to remain alert and especially warned those living in Greater Noida from stepping out at all.

"All African Students Studying in Greater Noida are hereby Instructed to Stay at home as the situation remains volatile. We are advising all the student representatives from Africa to request their students to remain at home," their advisory said. It added that a clear number of attacks was impossible to know because of the sheer numbers of calls seeking help.

As fears of more attacks lingered most African students and student leaders have switched off their phones or stopped answering them.

Duterte to US: Why didn't you send armada vs China islands?

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte said he has asked the U.S. ambassador why America did not deploy an armada of warships to pressure China to stop building man-made islands that are now at the heart of regional concerns in the disputed South China Sea.

Duterte said in a speech that U.S. Ambassador Sung Kim was unable to reply to the question when they met Monday in southern Davao city, where the president had a separate meeting with the Chinese ambassador. While criticizing the U.S., Duterte did not berate China's behavior in his speech.

Duterte

Duterte said he told Kim that he was surprised by what he described as U.S. inaction when newspapers were publishing pictures of China's construction of runways and other structures on the newly built islands in the disputed waters.

"Had America really wanted to avoid trouble, early on ... why did you not send the armada of the 7th Fleet which is stationed there in the Pacific, you just make a U-turn and go there and tell them right on their face, stop it?" Duterte said he asked Kim, referring to the U.S. naval fleet based in Japan.

Kim, who arrived in Manila last year as American ambassador, replied that he was assigned elsewhere at the time and could not give an answer, Duterte said.

Duterte spoke in a visit to Oriental Mindoro province a day after concerns were raised over a report by a U.S. think tank that China has nearly completed construction work on three man-made islands that will allow it to deploy combat aircraft and surface-to-air missiles.

The Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies analyzed recent satellite photos and concluded that runways, aircraft hangers, radar sites and hardened surface-to-air missile shelters have either been finished or are nearing completion.

One of the islands mentioned in the report, Philippine-claimed Mischief Reef, was seized by China in 1995, drawing protests from Manila then. Another island, Subi, is very close to a Philippine-occupied island in the Spratly chain, which is claimed in whole or in part by China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei.

World

It's not EU, it's me: UK files for EU divorce after 44 years

AP

British Union flag waves in front of the Elizabeth Tower at Houses of Parliament containing the bell know as "Big Ben" in central London, Wednesday, March 29, 2017.

LONDON (AP)—Britain filed for divorce from the European Union on Wednesday, with fond words and promises of friendship that could not disguise the historic nature of the schism—or the years of argument and hard-nosed bargaining ahead as the U.K. leaves the embrace of the bloc for an uncertain future as "global Britain."

Prime Minister Theresa May triggered the two-year divorce process in a six-page letter to EU Council President Donald Tusk, vowing that Britain will maintain a "deep and special partnership" with its neighbors in the bloc. In response, Tusk told Britain: "We already miss you."

May's invocation of Article 50 of the EU's key treaty sets the clock ticking on two years of negotiations until Britain becomes the first major nation to leave the union—as Big Ben bongs midnight on March 29, 2019.

The U.K. joined what was then called the European Economic Community in 1973. Its departure could not come at a worse time for the EU, which has grown from six founding members six decades ago to a largely borderless span of 28 nations and a half billion people. Nationalist and populist parties are on the march across the continent in revolt against the bloc's mission of "ever-closer union." And in Washington, President Donald Trump has derided the EU, NATO and other pillars of Western order built up since World War II.

"This is an historic moment from which there can be no turning back," May told lawmakers in the House of Commons, moments after her letter was hand-delivered to Tusk in Brussels by Britain's ambassador to the EU, Tim Barrow.

In the letter, May said the two sides should "engage with one another constructively and respectfully, in a spirit of sincere cooperation."

But for all the warmth, the next two years will be a tough test of the notion that divorcees can remain good friends.

May is under pressure from her Conservative Party and Britain's largely Euroskeptic press not to concede too much in exchange for a good trade deal with the EU. For their part, the other 27 members of the bloc will need to stick together and stand firm as they ride out the biggest threat in the union's history.

Brexit has been hailed by populists across Europe—including French far-right leader Marine Le Pen—who hope the U.K. is only the first in a series of departures. EU leaders are determined to stop that happening.

"The European Union is a historically unique success story," German Chancellor Angela Merkel said in Berlin. "It remains one even after Britain's withdrawal. We will take care of that."

Britons voted 52 percent to 48 percent in favor of leaving the bloc in a referendum nine months ago, and they remain deeply divided over Brexit.

In the pro-Brexit heartland of Dover on England's south coast—whose white cliffs face toward France—some were jubilant as May pulled the trigger.

"I'm a local church minister, and I said to my wife, 'All I want to do before I die is see my country free from the shackles of Europe,'" said 70-year-old Mike Piper, buying a copy of the Sun tabloid with the front-page headline "Dover and Out."

Former UKIP leader Nigel Farage, who campaigned for years to take Brexit from a fringe cause to a reality, said Britain had passed "the point of no return."

"I can still, to be honest with you, scarcely believe today has come," he said.

But many young Britons who have grown up in the EU and voted overwhelmingly for Britain to remain a member worry about how much they could lose.

"I'm really anxious about it. It was a bad idea," said Elaine Morrison, an 18-year-old who was traveling to Barcelona with friends. "I like traveling to other countries And it will be a trouble now. The pound is weaker so it will cost more to buy the euros, and the costs of travel will be more expensive. And there will be red tape."

People in London's financial district, the City, are anxious about the uncertainty.

"No one knows how this is going to go," said City worker Nicola Gibson. "It's a gamble, it's a risk."

May's six-page letter to Tusk was conciliatory, stressing that Britons want to remain "committed partners and allies to our friends across the continent."

WORLD BRIEFS

Arab leaders ready to work with Trump on Mideast peace deal

DEAD SEA, Jordan (AP)—Arab leaders on Wednesday relaunched a peace plan that offers Israel full ties in exchange for Palestinian statehood, signaling to President Donald Trump that they are ready to engage if he tries to broker a broader Mideast peace. Host Jordan said the one-day Arab summit held on the shores of the Dead Sea sent a "message of peace"—though one that could put new pressure on Israel to withdraw from lands it occupied in the 1967 Mideast war. The gathering came ahead of White House meetings in coming weeks between Trump and three Arab leaders—Jordan's King Abdullah II, Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. The trio met on the sidelines of the summit to consolidate positions ahead of the White House meetings, officials said.

Iraqi officials: Suicide truck bombing kills 15 in Baghdad

BAGHDAD (AP)—A suicide truck bomb targeted a police checkpoint in southern Baghdad on Wednesday night, killing 15 people and wounding 45, according to Iraqi officials. The bomber detonated the vehicle, an oil tanker laden with explosives, security and hospital officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity under regulations. Three policemen were among the dead while the rest were civilians, and a number of policemen were also wounded, the officials said. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, but the Islamic State group has carried out similar attacks as their territorial hold in Iraq weakens. Iraqi forces are fighting IS in western Mosul, where some 2,000 IS fighters are launching fierce counterattacks.

IS holds terrified civilians as human shields in Syrian city

BEIRUT (AP)—Residents of the northern Syrian city of Raqqa live in terror, trapped as a massive human shield in the Islamic State's de facto capital ahead of the final battle with U.S.-backed opposition forces for the militant group's last major urban stronghold. A belt of land mines and militant checkpoints circle the city. Inside, all the men have been ordered to wear the jihadis' garb of baggy pants and long shirts—making it difficult to distinguish Islamic State militants from civilians. Hundreds if not thousands of Syrians who fled from other parts of the country now live in tents in Raqqa's streets, vulnerable to both warplanes and ground fighting. Enormous tarps have been stretched for blocks in the city center to hide the militants' movements from spy planes and satellites.

Off The Wall

‘Star Trek’ wax figures get new mission: helping museum

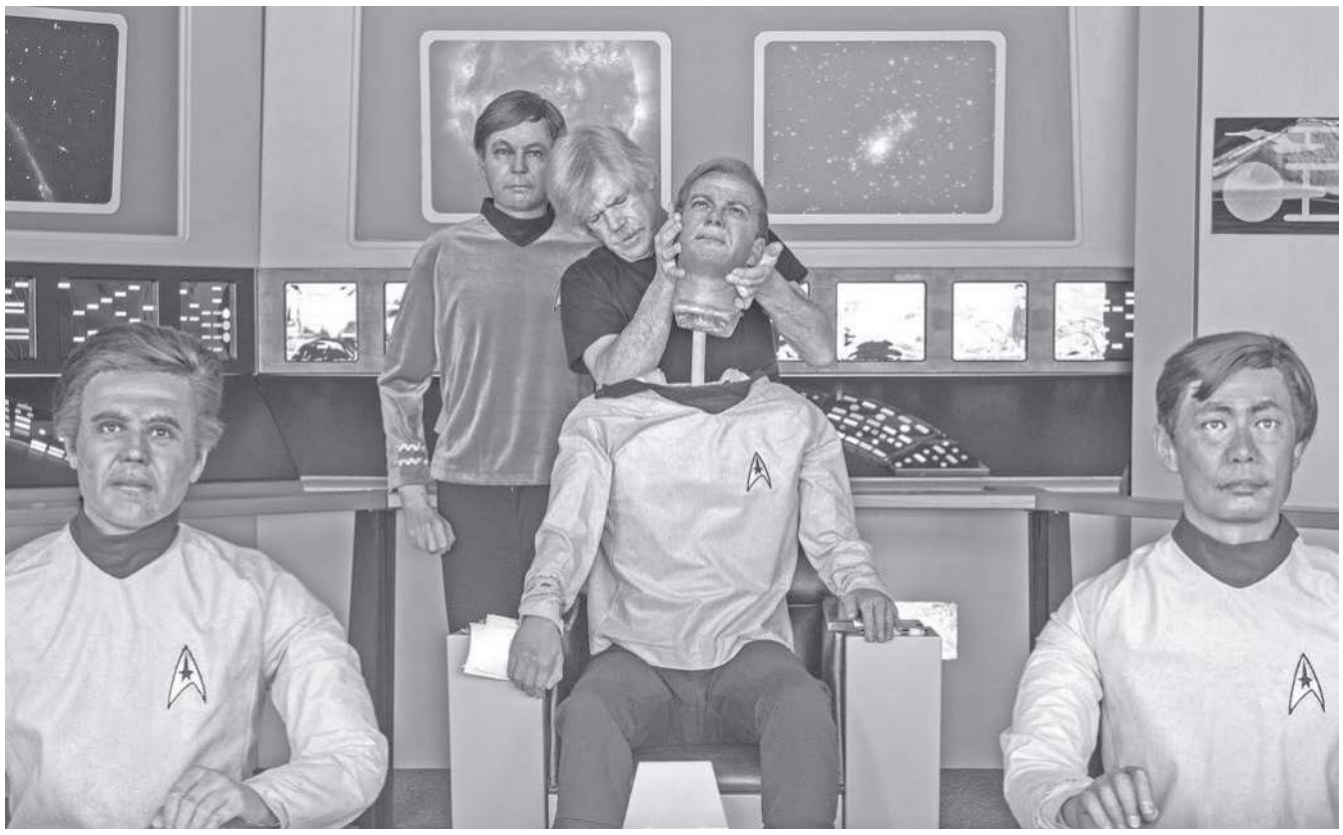
LOS ANGELES (AP)—The starship Enterprise has a new five-year mission: to boldly go and raise money to help a quirky museum live long and prosper.

The Hollywood Science Fiction Museum recently took possession of life-sized wax figures of all seven crew members from the original “Star Trek” TV series, including Capt. Kirk.

The figures and a replica of the Enterprise bridge had spent a decade in storage.

“This is kind of a holy grail of Trek fandom,” museum founder Huston Huddleston said in an online museum video.

The figures were crafted for the Movieland Wax Museum, a Buena Park tourist attraction. Around 10 years ago, the defunct museum auctioned off its contents, including the figures that had drawn generations of Trekkies.



AP

In this Saturday, March 25, 2017 photo, Steve Greenthal puts on the head of his Captain Kirk wax figure at the Fullerton Airport before donating them to the Hollywood Science Fiction Museum in Fullerton, Calif. The figures were purchased when the Movieland Wax Museum in Buena Park went out of business. The figures are being restored for a five-year tour to raise money to get the museum a permanent home.

“As far as anyone knew, it was lost,” Huddleston said Wednesday of the Trek tableau. “It was either in a rich person’s house and never seen again, or it was destroyed...nobody knew.”

In fact, the intrepid crew had been rescued.

At the museum auction, Steve and Lori Greenthal ponied up $40,000 for Kirk, Spock, Sulu, Uhura, Dr. “Bones” McCoy, Chekov and Engineer Scott.

They wanted to keep the set from being broken up.

“We took them home and put them in our dining room,” Lori told the *Orange County Register.*

Steve didn’t like the way their life-like eyes stared.

“We put paper bags over their heads,” he said.

Steve called a buddy, Chris Liebl of Anaheim, and they hatched a plan to make money from the figures. Liebl offered to pay half the purchase price and together they spent another $40,000 building a 20-by-30-foot mockup of the Enterprise bridge, complete with sounds effects from the TV show.

They took the set to Las Vegas for a 40th Star Trek anniversary gathering and sold about 800 photographs of people posing with the figures. George Takei, who played Sulu, and Nichelle Nichols, who portrayed Uhuru, even stopped by to pose with their alter egos.

But the venture didn’t make money and the setup was cumbersome.

OFFBEAT BRIEFS

Family gets a shock when turkey crashes through windshield

ROLLING PRAIRIE, Ind. (AP)—A New Jersey family traveling through northern Indiana got a shock when a 30-pound turkey crashed through their vehicle’s windshield. LaPorte County Sheriff’s Office Capt. Michael Kellems says the flying bird collided Tuesday with the family’s rented SUV. The dead turkey was left lodged in the shattered windshield as driver John Tarabocchia of Emerson, New Jersey, pulled over along U.S. 20. Kellems says he has been an officer for 31 years and has “never seen something like that.” He says Tarabocchia and his three passengers suffered only minor cuts. Tarabocchia tells The Indianapolis Star his family was headed to a Chicago airport to return home after visiting his daughter at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend. The family was about 25 miles (40 kilometers) west of South Bend.

Photo op turns into chance encounter with big gator on links

KIAWAH ISLAND, S.C. (AP)—Carrie Moores says she’d only seen alligators at the zoo before relocating last year from Connecticut to South Carolina. That changed this week during a chance encounter with a very big gator on the golf links. Moores told the Post and Courier of Charleston she was taking photographs at a golf fundraiser for a free medical clinic Monday when the gator approached some golfers who had their backs turned. She quickly snapped the picture and warned the golfers, who hopped in carts and safely drove off. The alligator then disappeared into a lagoon at the Kiawah Island Club’s River Course. Moores said people told her it was one of the largest gators they’d seen. More accustomed to squirrels in Connecticut, Moores said, “it was literally a dinosaur.

Driver runs out of gas again after stealing squad car

TULARE, S.D. (AP)—A driver who called for help after running out of gas is accused of stealing a deputy’s squad car in South Dakota and leading authorities in a pursuit before once again running out of fuel. Troy James is charged with felony grand theft. Officials say James called for assistance early Monday on Highway 281 near the town of Tulare, saying his car had stopped and he apparently ran out of fuel. Sheriff Kevin Schurch tells the Aberdeen American News the responding deputy tried to detain James because he was acting bizarrely. Schurch says James pushed the officer out of the squad and took off. He says James was apparently armed. The South Dakota Highway Patrol and other officers joined in pursuing James. He was eventually caught about 140 miles (225 kilometers) away.

Attorney: Home owners got another letter from ‘The Watcher’

WESTFIELD, N.J. (AP)—A New Jersey couple who claim they were scared away from their home by creepy letters they received from “The Watcher” say another letter was delivered.

Lee Levitt, an attorney for Derek and Maria Broaddus, wrote in a legal brief that the letter arrived in late February, a few weeks after a tenant rented and moved into the Westfield home. It’s the fourth letter the couple has received from “The Watcher,” who claims he is the rightful owner of the home the Broadduses bought for nearly $1.4 million in 2014.

Levitt says the letter contained specific threats and was “more derogatory and sinister than any of the previous letters.” Westfield police declined to comment on the latest letter, citing an ongoing investigation.

In one of the earlier correspondences, the stalker asked whether the new family brought him the “young blood” that he requested. The Broadduses, who have young children, refused to move into the home and have been unsuccessful in their attempts to sell the property.

They sued the prior owners of the house in June 2015, claiming that they also received a letter from “The Watcher” but never disclosed it. That family has since countersued, stating that the letter they received was not threatening and alleging that they were defamed.

The Broadduses have said they can’t live in the house because of the letters, which they say came from someone with a “mentally disturbed fixation” on the home.

They are also suing Westfield because the town’s planning board rejected their plan to raze the house and subdivide the land so they could build two houses.

GOLDEN HOARD AP

An undated handout photograph, taken at an unknown location, shows part of a hoard of gold coins, made between 1847 and 1915, discovered hidden in an upright piano made by Broadwood & Sons of London and sold to a music establishment in Essex, England, in 1906. British officials are trying to trace the owner of a trove of gold coins worth a “life-changing” amount of money found stashed inside a piano. A coroner investigating the find on Thursday March 16, 2017 urged anyone with information to come forward.

Science & Technology

Samsung's Galaxy S8 phone aims to dispel the Note 7 debacle

NEW YORK (AP)—Samsung seems to be playing it safe -at least with its battery—as it unveils its first major smartphone since the embarrassing recall of its fire-prone Note 7.

The Galaxy S8 will come in two sizes, both bigger than comparable models from last year. To maximize display space, there's no more physical home button. The S8 also sports a voice assistant intended to rival Siri and Google Assistant.

But battery capacity isn't increasing, despite the larger sizes, meaning more breathing room for the battery. Samsung had pushed the engineering envelope with the Note 7 battery, which contributed to spontaneous combustions. That recall cost Samsung at least $5.3 billion. Though many customers remain loyal, any further misstep could prove fatal.

The phone, announced Wednesday in New York, will come out April 21. The standard-size S8 will cost about $750 and the larger S8 Plus about $850—both about $100 more than comparable iPhones and rival Android phones.

The Samsung Galaxy S8, right, and S8 Plus appear on display after a news conference, Wednesday, March 29, 2017, in New York. AP

"That's a big bet that its phones will justify a higher price, whereas it could have used these new phones as a way to drive higher sales after a couple of years of stagnation," said Jan Dawson, an analyst with Jackdaw Research.

ABOUT THAT BATTERY

Samsung has blamed the Note 7 fires on multiple design and manufacturing defects in its batteries. Inspectors concluded some of the batteries were too small for their capacity, putting pressure on the internal structure.

The company says phones will now go through multiple inspections, including X-rays and stress tests at extreme temperatures. And Samsung no longer is trying to squeeze a lot of battery power in a small space. The S8 Plus model, for instance, has 3 percent less battery power than the Galaxy S7 Edge, but the phone itself is 12 percent larger.

Samsung says software and chip improvements mean the new phones will still last all day.

BIGGER, TALLER SCREENS

The S8 phone's display measures 5.8 inches diagonally, compared with 5.1 inches on the S7. The S8 Plus will be 6.2 inches, compared with S7 Edge's 5.5 inches and the Note 7's 5.7 inches. Samsung is getting rid of the "Edge" distinction and bringing curved sides to all S8 phones.

Samsung has also made it easier to look at apps without scrolling as much. It enlarged the screen by minimizing the frame, or bezel, surrounding the display; gone is a horizontal strip with the home button at the bottom. Instead, Samsung is embedding a virtual home button in the display and moving the fingerprint sensor to the back. In addition, both S8 models are taller than their predecessors, but widths are roughly the same. That makes them easy to hold in one hand.

VOICE ASSISTANT

Samsung claims its new voice assistant, Bixby, will do much more than rivals from Apple, Google, Microsoft and Amazon. For one thing, Samsung says Bixby will be able to handle any smartphone task currently managed by touch. When viewing a photo, just say "send this to Bob" to pull up messaging options and contact information for the Bobs you know. Bixby will also offer information on books, wine and other products scanned with the phone's camera.

But there's a major caveat: Bixby will work only with selected Samsung apps, including the photo gallery and messages, along with Google Play Music. Not all touch commands will have voice counterparts right away. Other apps will be able to adopt Bixby, but Samsung has had a mixed track record in getting other companies to support its home-brewed functions, such as an "Air View" feature for showing pop-up previews of content. Never seen it? Exactly.

"I think the brand will struggle to compete in the longer term with the broader digital ecosystems from Google, Amazon or Apple," Forrester analyst Thomas Husson said.

OTHER FEATURES

The front camera is getting a boost to 8 megapixels, from 5 megapixels, while the rear one stays at 12 megapixels.

As with previous models, the S8 is water and dust resistant and features a memory card slot to supplement 64 gigabytes of built-in storage, which is higher than the base models of most rivals. The S8 will get an iris scanner to let people unlock the phone by looking at it ; the feature was new in the ditched Note 7 phone.

Samsung will include premium earbuds from AKG, a brand it acquired when it bought Harman International.

BEYOND THE S8

Samsung's virtual-reality camera, Gear 360, will now accommodate a higher resolution, known as 4K, and work with iPhones, not just Samsung phones.

An optional docking station will turn the S8 phone into a desktop computer when connected to a regular TV. In that mode, people will be able to resize windows and work with several apps at once. It's similar to what Microsoft offers on its Windows 10 phones. Samsung also unveiled a router that doubles as a hub for internet-connected appliances and lights.

Samsung said its previously announced Gear VR headset upgrade, which will now include a hand-held controller, will go on sale in April for about $130. Existing owners can buy just the controller for about $40. The company hasn't announced prices and release dates for the other accessories.

Science Matters

A cause of strange hearing loss

People who can't hear their friends at a noisy restaurant but pass a medical hearing test have "hidden hearing loss," and malfunctioning nerve cells can be the cause.

Weakness in the chain

A series of structures and nerves leads from eardrum to brain:

1 **Three tiny bones** carry vibrations from eardrum to inner ear

2 Vibrations travel inside fluid-filled **cochlea**

3 Vibration moves short **hair cells** in the cochlea

4 Each hair bundle stimulates the **organ of Corti** which is tied to nerve cells

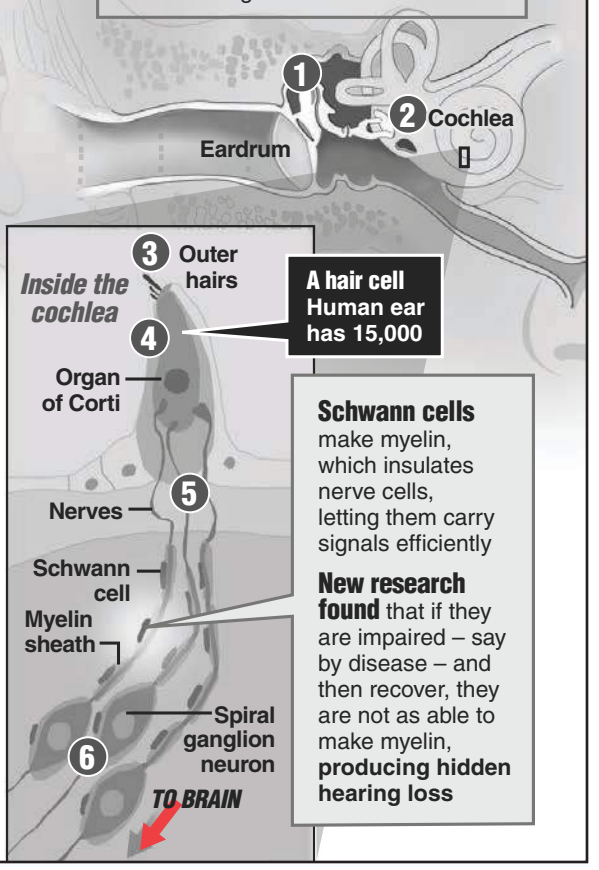
5 Nerve impulse travels into **auditory nerve fibers**

6 They carry the signal to the ear's **spiral ganglion neurons** and on to the brain

If the brain gets weak or poor signals from the ear, it cannot interpret them correctly

Hidden hearing loss

- First described in 2014
- Person cannot pick out specific sounds in noisy places
- Still poorly understood
- **One known cause** is loud noise, which damages hair cells and nerves


1
2 Cochlea
Eardrum
Inside the cochlea
3 Outer hairs
4
A hair cell Human ear has 15,000
Organ of Corti
5
Nerves
Schwann cell
Myelin sheath
Spiral ganglion neuron
6
TO BRAIN
Schwann cells make myelin, which insulates nerve cells, letting them carry signals efficiently
New research found that if they are impaired – say by disease – and then recover, they are not as able to make myelin, producing hidden hearing loss

Source: Gabriel Corfas of University of Michigan Kresge Hearing Research Institute, Nature Communications, Acoustical Society of America
Graphic: Helen Lee McComas, Tribune News Service

Got camera? Facebook adds more Snapchat-like features

NEW YORK (AP)—Facebook is adding more Snapchat-like features to its app. The company says it wants to let your camera "do the talking" as more people are posting photos and videos instead of blocks of text.

Facebook is rolling out an app update starting Tuesday. With it, you can tap a new camera icon on the top left corner. That opens up the phone's camera to do a photo or video post. You could have posted photos from the app before, but it took an extra tap.

Once you open the camera, you'll find Facebook's other new Snapchat-like features, including filters that can be added to images.

Other effects, such as animations and other interactive filters, are a new twist to dressed-up photos.

Also new is a "stories" tool that lets you post photos and videos that stay live for 24 hours. This feature is already available on Messenger and Instagram, which is owned by Facebook.

Snapchat pioneered camera-first sharing and is wildly popular with younger users. Years ago, Facebook tried to buy the company but was rebuffed. Since then, it has been trying, with varying degrees of success, to clone Snapchat's most popular features.

It might be working: Snapchat's growth rate has slowed down since Instagram introduced its own "stories" feature.

Life & Style

First reactions from 'The Fate of the Furious' screening

LAS VEGAS (AP)—"The Fate of the Furious" is in, and it's good according to first reactions to the upcoming film.

Universal Pictures surprised CinemaCon audiences on Wednesday with an unannounced screening of the eighth film in the franchise and praise spread quickly on Twitter.

The Hollywood Reporter's Rebecca Ford said it was perfection, while the trade publication's Aaron Couch said it is "exactly what you buy your ticket for," calling out Jason Statham's film-stealing sequences.

Couch also noted that there are a few "so bad they're good moments" that the improbable franchise has become known for, including a particularly over-the-top sequence with a submarine.

IMDB's Keith Simanton said director F. Gary Gray, a newcomer to the franchise fresh off of "Straight Outta Compton," is "up to the task."

Slashfilm's Peter Sciretta wrote that it "takes the ridiculousness to a whole new level, but feels very different."

And Steven Weintraub of Collider.com singled out Dwayne Johnson in particular who he called a "straight up superhero." Johnson, among other things, deadlifts concrete and coaches a girls soccer team.

"The Fate of the Furious" reunites the Los Angeles street racers, including Michelle Rodriquez, Tyrese Gibson, Ludacris, and Nathalie Emmanuel, taking them to the streets of Cuba, New York, Berlin and to the frozen Russian landscape. Charlize Theron joins as a dreadlocked baddie with nuclear ambitions and Scott Eastwood teams up with Kurt Russell as an agent in training.

Official reviews are embargoed until April 10 before it races into theaters on April 14.

Horror, adventure, stunts on display in Cruise's 'The Mummy'

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Universal Pictures is going back to its roots—monsters.

The studio on Wednesday debuted footage from its upcoming adventure film "The Mummy," which opens a monster universe drawing on Universal's vault of classic properties like "Bride of Frankenstein," ''Invisible Man" and "Creature from the Black Lagoon."

Tom Cruise stars in the Alex Kurtzman-directed "The Mummy," which is equal parts action and horror as Cruise's explorer Nick Morton attempts to combat an ancient evil that has been unlocked and threatens to destroy the world.

Sofia Boutella is the Mummy, once an Egyptian princess who turned to the dark side when denied the throne.

Kurtzman and the cast, including Boutella, Annabelle Wallis and Jake Johnson, discussed Cruise's famous commitment to eye-popping stunts.

"I think I was brought onto this movie to be afraid to do stunts with Tom Cruise," Johnson said. "Tom does it all and he makes his co-stars do it too. And I do mean 'make.'"

Johnson laughed that when he would complain when he got hurt or bruised, Cruise would quip back: "Yeah, we jumped off a building dummy. It hurts!"

Cruise, who is on location for a shoot, delivered a video message to the audience.

"My love for this began with universal classic films," Cruise said. "To usher in a new age of gods and monsters is something that makes me very proud and excited."

Audiences can meet "the original monster" June 9.

Vin Diesel on Paul Walker: We don't want to let him down

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Vin Diesel says he and the "Fast and Furious" crew do not want to let down the late Paul Walker with their new film.

The actor on Wednesday spoke to a packed auditorium at CinemaCon in Las Vegas about the eighth installment in the franchise, "The Fate of the Furious"— the first full film in the series made in the aftermath of Walker's death in 2013.

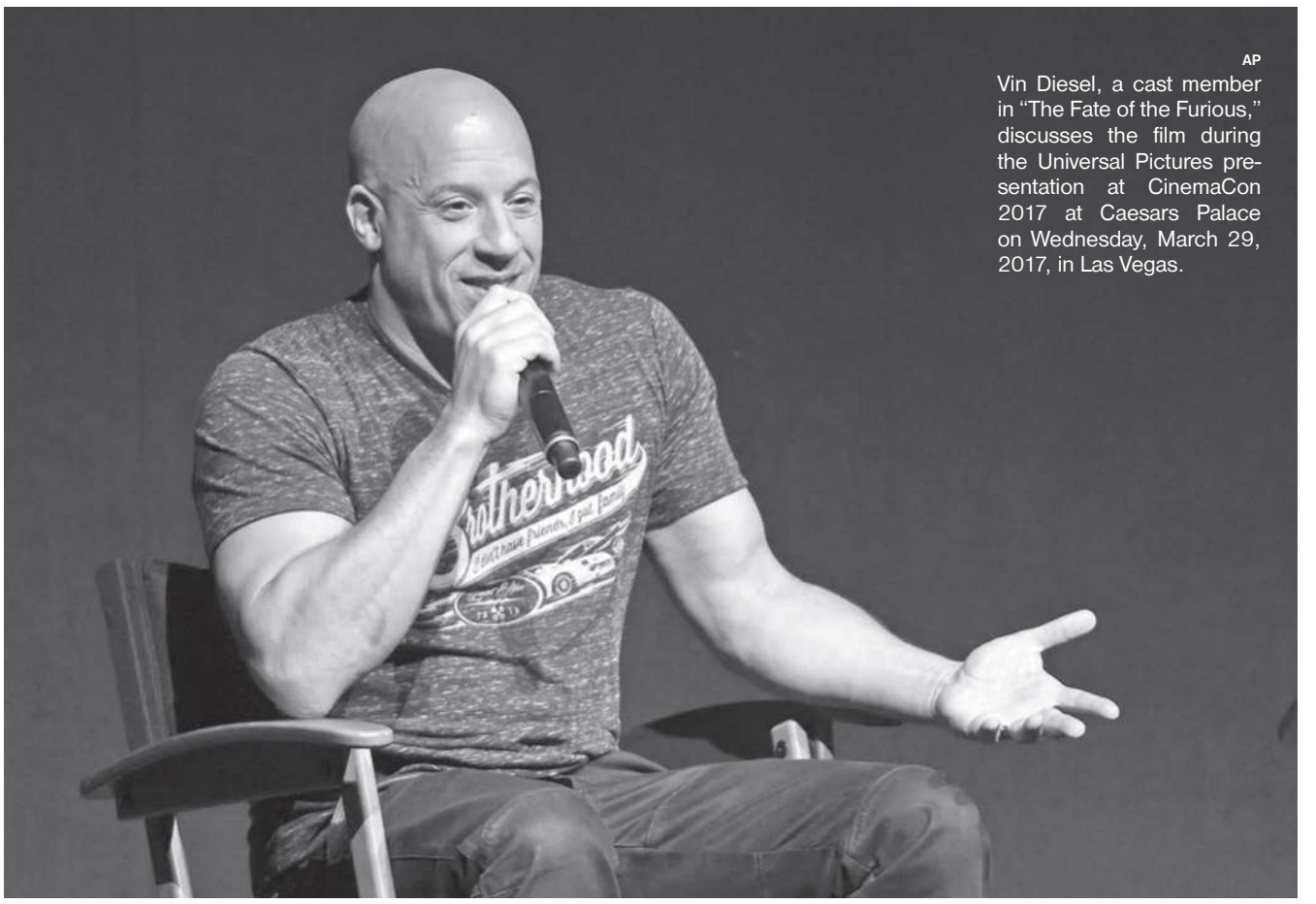
After Walker died, his two brothers helped complete action scenes in "Furious 7," which earned more than $1.5 billion globally when it was released in 2015.

A choked up Diesel said Walker had always envisioned eight movies in the series.

"I always feel like he's looking down on us and we don't want to let him down," Diesel said.

"The Fate of the Furious" speeds into theaters on April 14.

Diesel in his usual manner promised that it will be, "The best movie you have ever seen."



AP

Vin Diesel, a cast member in "The Fate of the Furious," discusses the film during the Universal Pictures presentation at CinemaCon 2017 at Caesars Palace on Wednesday, March 29, 2017, in Las Vegas.

Bob Dylan archives open in Oklahoma; public center planned

TULSA, Okla. (AP)—Part of music icon Bob Dylan's once-secret 6,000-piece archive, including thousands of hours of studio sessions, film reels and caches of unpublished lyrics, has opened in Oklahoma, curators announced this week.

More than 1,000 pieces spanning Dylan's six-decade career are available to scholars at the Gilcrease Museum's Helmerich Center for American Research in Tulsa.

The public will get a glimpse of some of the material when the Bob Dylan Center opens in the city's downtown Brady Arts District in about two years. The center will, fittingly, occupy another part of a building that houses a museum devoted to Oklahoma-born Woody Guthrie, one of Dylan's major influences.

The George Kaiser Family Foundation and the University of Tulsa announced last year that the collection had been acquired from Dylan for an estimated $15 million to $20 million. The foundation also snapped up Guthrie's archives in 2011, paying $3 million. The Woody Guthrie Center opened two years later.

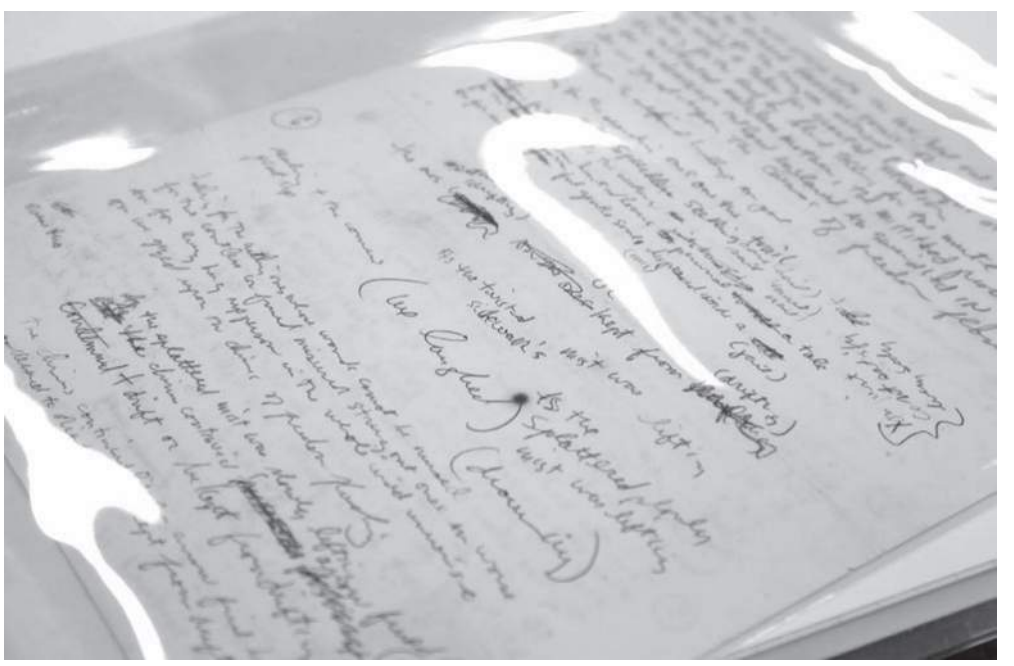
"A couple hundred books have been written about Bob Dylan, maybe equal to or more books than have been written about Abraham Lincoln, but none of the writers have had the access to any of this material," said Stanton Doyle, a senior program officer at the foundation. "I think people will get an insight into Dylan and his creative process that's never been released."

The archive is a goldmine for Dylan fans. There are pages of unrecorded verses—one for a song called "No Particular Length of Time"— lyrics scrawled across hotel stationary; pocket memo books of every shape and color, filled with notes on royalty rates and telephone numbers for notables like Allen Ginsberg and John Lennon. Faxes from former President Jimmy Carter and Rolling Stones guitarist Keith Richards and letters from former first lady Michelle Obama, director Martin Scorsese and Bono are also in the trove.

Then there are the audio recordings and film reels—enough so that it would take around 113 days to consecutively listen to and watch all of the available material, estimates curator Michael Chaiken.

"Nobody knew Bob held onto so much stuff," Chaiken said in an interview Wednesday. "The materials we are opening up have never been seen before by the public at large."

Chaiken found himself doing a deep dive on the sessions that would become the album titled "John Wesley Harding."



AP

This photo taken March 2, 2015, shows original Bob Dylan lyrics in protective folders at the Helmerich Center at Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa, Okla.

Book: **Angelina Jolie** was drug-tested for 'Tomb Raider'

NEW YORK (AP)—To help shed her early reputation, Angelina Jolie agreed to be drug tested during production of 2001's "Lara Croft: Tomb Raider," according to a new book.

The Hollywood Reporter on Wednesday released an excerpt from an upcoming biography of the former studio head Sherry Lansing, "Leading Lady." Lansing stepped down as Paramount Pictures chairman and chief executive in 2005.

When casting the then 24-year-old Jolie for "Lara Croft," Lansing had concerns about Jolie's stability. This was shortly before the actress wed Billy Bob Thornton.

Then-Paramount production president John Goldwyn said the studio had Jolie undergo random drug tests. Director Simon West recounts that Jolie, eager for the part and to prove herself, said she would do anything—including daily drug tests—to "prove that I'm worthy."

In this Nov. 5, 2015m file photo, actress and director Angelina Jolie Pitt arrives at the 2015 AFI Fest opening night premiere of "By The Sea," in Los Angeles. AP

Family and close friends say goodbye to George Michael

In this Sept. 9, 2012 file photo, British singer George Michael sings in concert to raise money for AIDS charity Sidaction, in Paris, France. AP

LONDON (AP)—Singer George Michael's publicist says his funeral has been held in London.

The private funeral service took place Wednesday at Highgate Cemetery in north London. Michael's publicity agency, Connie Filippello Publicity, said in a statement it was attended by family and close friends

The family thanked his fans for their "many messages of love and support" and asked for its privacy to be respected.

Karl Marx and authors George Eliot and Douglas Adams are among the famous people buried at Highgate.

A post-mortem investigation found that Michael died of natural causes as the result of heart disease and a fatty liver.

The former Wham! singer was found dead at his country home in Oxfordshire on Dec. 25 at age 53.

The singer had battled health problems and drug addiction.

Talent agency Wilhelmina signs rapper Nicki Minaj

NEW YORK (AP)—The Wilhelmina talent and modeling agency has signed Nicki Minaj to its celebrity division.

The agency said in a statement Wednesday that it will work to further the six-time American Music Award winner's influence in fashion and beauty.

"She is a style pioneer and an icon," Wilhelmina CEO Bill Wackermann said.

Minaj said of Wilhelmina in the statement: "They get me," adding: "I love the synergy between my music and how it inspires my fashion."

Known for bold and often risque looks, the nine-time Grammy nominee is a regular on fashion show front rows around the world. She was filmed just days before the recent London attacks posing in a black-and-silver dress and jeweled headpiece on Westminster Bridge, reportedly for a new video promoting a track she collaborated on with Drake and Lil Wayne.

In this Nov. 20, 2016 file photo, Nicki Minaj performs "Do You Mind" at the American Music Awards at the Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles. AP

No cellphones backstage for accountants after Oscar flub

LOS ANGELES (AP)—PwC accountants won't be allowed to have their cellphones backstage during future Oscar telecasts.

Film academy president Cheryl Boone Isaacs sent an email to academy members Wednesday detailing the new protocols for announcing Oscar winners developed after the best-picture flub at last month's Academy Awards. Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences spokeswoman Teni Melidonian confirmed the authenticity of the email.

The academy's Board of Governors discussed its ongoing relationship with PwC, formerly known as PricewaterhouseCoopers, and established the new controls at a meeting Tuesday night. Besides banning cellphones, the academy is adding a third balloting partner to the telecast, and bringing in PwC's U.S. chairman to provide oversight.

PwC, which has handled Oscar balloting and other academy business for 83 years, has claimed responsibility for the biggest mistake in Oscar history. Balloting partner Brian Cullinan tweeted a photo of Emma Stone backstage moments before handing presenters Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway the wrong envelope for best picture. They announced "La La Land" as the winner, though "Moonlight" actually won.

Boone Isaacs blamed Cullinan's distraction for the error. PwC said that both he and partner Martha Ruiz failed to follow established protocols that night and did not act quickly enough to correct the error.

Traditionally, two PwC partners have overseen Oscar balloting and are the only two people who know the winners before they are announced live onstage. They're stationed on opposite sides of the Dolby Theatre stage, each with an identical set of winners' envelopes for the show's 24 categories.

Boone Isaacs said in her email Wednesday that a third balloting partner with knowledge of the winners will sit with the telecast director going forward. Balloting partners will also be required to participate in Oscar rehearsals, she said.

She called the 89th Academy Awards "the most extraordinary and memorable Oscars ceremony in decades" and said that academy officials have been working since then to develop the new protocols adopted Tuesday.

Britain's Prince Charles on 3-country charm tour amid Brexit

BUCHAREST, Romania (AP)—Britain's Prince Charles arrived in Bucharest Wednesday at the start of a nine-day tour to Romania, Italy and Austria that was seen as an effort to reassure European Union nations that Britain remains a close ally.

Charles arrived in the Romanian capital on the same day British Prime Minister Theresa May launched the Brexit process. President Klaus Iohannis greeted the prince at the 17th century Cotroceni presidential palace and will give him the Order of the Star of Romania, an award for exceptional service to Romania.

Charles' website said his tour would "highlight the U.K.'s relationship with European partners in areas including social cohesion, military ties and combatting human trafficking."

The prince regularly visits Romania and owns two properties in Transylvania. In 2015, he set up The Prince of Wales Foundation Romania, a charity that supports the East European nation's heritage, rural life and sustainable development.

He leaves Romania on Friday and will stop next in Italy. Charles' wife, Camilla, is expected to accompany him to Italy and Austria.

Wonder Woman' wows, Affleck makes appearance at CinemaCon

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Wonder Woman is here to save the world, and, possibly the future of Warner Bros. DC Comics universe.

New footage featuring actress Gal Gadot's lasso-wielding superhero stole the show Wednesday night at CinemaCon, which also featured some peeks at "Aquaman" and "Justice League." It also marked Ben Affleck's first public appearance since acknowledging he'd recently completed rehab for alcohol addiction.

The "Batman" star didn't say anything, but just stood alongside his "Justice League" director Zack Snyder and co-stars Henry Cavill, Jason Momoa and Ezra Miller.

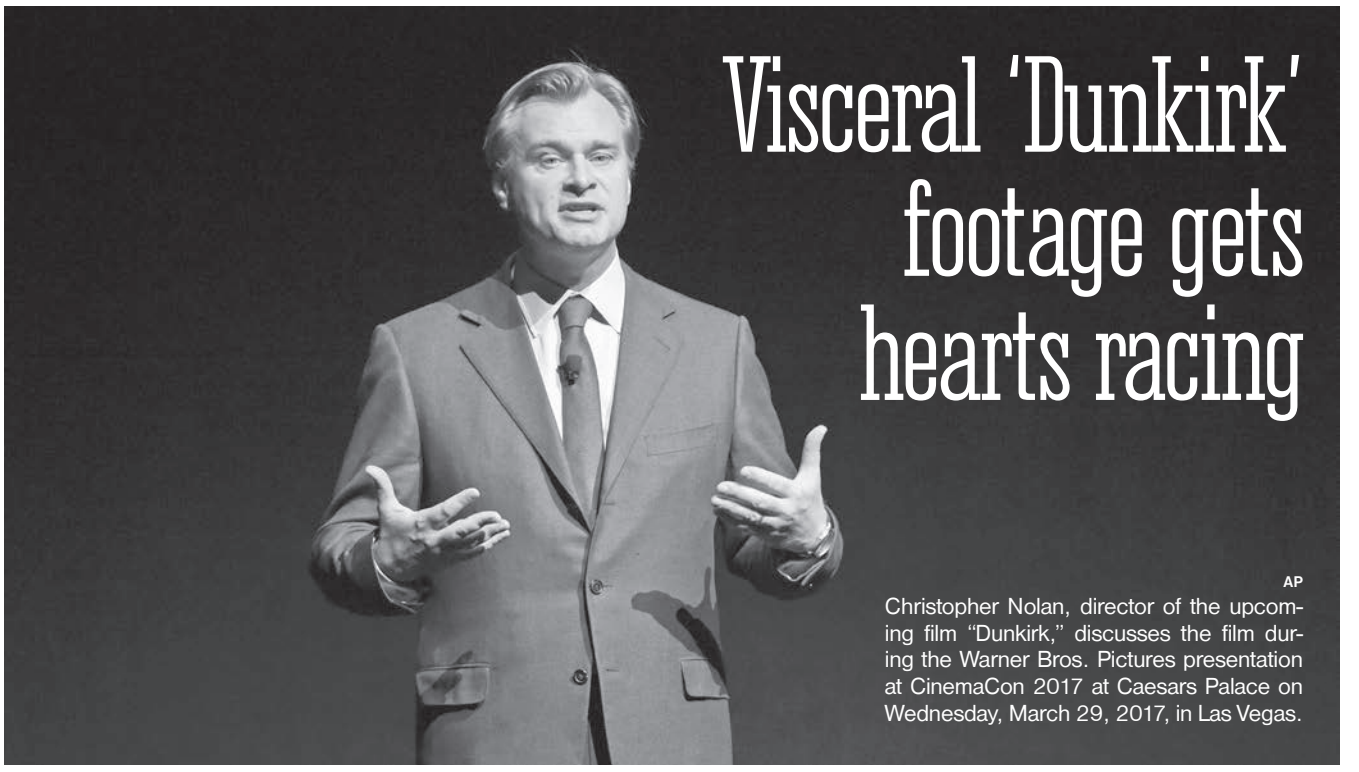
But it was Wonder Woman's show, even though Gadot wasn't in Las Vegas. The sepia-soaked extended clips highlighted the World War I espionage thrills as Diana/Wonder Woman adjusts to life with mortals.

Co-star Chris Pine, who plays an American soldier, said the Patty Jenkins-directed film had a "Casablanca" feel.

Even the new "Justice League" footage spotlighted Gadot's Wonder Woman as she breaks into Affleck's supposedly secured bat cave with ease and informs the caped crusader that they would need to assemble to defeat a threat.

"Wonder Woman" hits theaters June 2 and "Justice League" bows Nov. 17.

Visceral 'Dunkirk' footage gets hearts racing



AP

Christopher Nolan, director of the upcoming film "Dunkirk," discusses the film during the Warner Bros. Pictures presentation at CinemaCon 2017 at Caesars Palace on Wednesday, March 29, 2017, in Las Vegas.

LAS VEGAS (AP)—A propeller stops midair. Soldiers packed like sardines on a pier cower in fear of an unseen threat.

Those are the images Christopher Nolan left CinemaCon audiences hanging onto Wednesday as he premiered new footage from "Dunkirk," his long-awaited epic about the storied World War II evacuation.

"It's something British people grow up with. It's in our DNA," Nolan said. "It's something that's been close to my heart for a long time."

Nolan told the audience of theater owners that he wanted to tell the story in the most visceral way possible, putting audiences on the beaches, in the air and running with the troops.

The "Interstellar" and "Dark Knight" director shot the film entirely on large format celluloid and said theaters are the only way to experience the suspenseful survival story.

"The only platform I'm interested in talking about is theatrical exhibition," Nolan said. "I want to thank you all for everything you've done for my films. Without you there is no audience."

The film's large eclectic ensemble cast includes veterans like Kenneth Branagh and Mark Ryland, Nolan mainstays Tom Hardy and Cillian Murphy, pop star Harry Styles and a few newcomers like Fionn Whitehead.

It arrives in theaters on July 21.

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Allman Brothers Band co-founder's wife arrested in Florida

SARASOTA, Fla. (AP)—The wife of an Allman Brothers Band founding member is accused of pointing a rifle at members of a rowing team in Florida. Sarasota County Sheriff's officials say 62-year-old Donna Betts was charged Tuesday with 18 counts of aggravated assault with a firearm. She's married to guitarist Dickey Betts. The Herald-Tribune reports a 911 caller said the woman was standing on the dock behind her home Monday, pointing a rifle toward about 100 teens and coaches from the Sarasota Crew rowing team in boats and on a nearby dock. Arrest records say Donna Betts threatened to shoot them and called 911, saying the rowers have destroyed her life. She lives next to the team's practice facility. Betts is being held without bond. An attorney wasn't listed on jail records.

Poehler, Offerman team up for NBC craft-making reality show

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Former "Parks and Recreation" stars Amy Poehler and Nick Offerman are reuniting for an NBC reality competition focused on craft making. The network says Poehler and Offerman will produce and host "The Handmade Project." The series pits "eight of America's best all-around makers" against one another in a series of projects over six episodes. In addition to playing Ron Swanson on "Parks and Rec," Offerman is well-known as an accomplished wood craftsman. He owns a custom woodworking business in Los Angeles and wrote a book about the craft last year. NBC calls Poehler "a self-proclaimed crafting novice." She says in a statement that she's looking forward to finally conquering her fear of papier-mache. NBC did not say when the show will air.

Lamar Odom regrets affairs, says cocaine helped end career

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Lamar Odom says he's "a walking miracle" after being found unconscious with cocaine in his system in a Nevada brothel in 2015. Odom tells US Weekly he hid his cocaine use from ex-wife Khloe Kardashian for a while, but she found out about two years before their 2013 split. He also says that he regrets "having multiple affairs with different women" while married to Kardashian. Kardashian filed for divorce in 2013 but delayed it after the incident at the brothel. He says Kardashian helped him regain his memory following the episode. Their divorce was finalized in December. Odom blames cocaine for helping end his NBA career. He says "drugs killed my drive to want to train and be in shape." Odom says he's sober now after finishing a rehab stint in January.

Justin Timberlake to perform at US Grand Prix in Austin

AUSTIN, Texas (AP)—Justin Timberlake will perform race weekend at Formula One's only stop in the U.S. Organizers of the U.S. Grand Prix announced Wednesday that the pop singer will perform on Oct. 21. The Texas race got a major boost in 2016 from Taylor Swift's only concert of the year. Bobby Epstein, president of the Circuit of the Americas, says music artists see the weekend as a global stage and Timberlake "fits right in." Timberlake is scheduled to perform after race qualifying. The U.S. Grand Prix is the following day.

Rare Harriet Tubman photo from 1860s up for auction

NEW YORK (AP)—A rare photograph of 19th-century abolitionist and Underground Railroad hero Harriet Tubman is up for sale at a New York City auction house. Swann Galleries is offering the circa late 1860s image for sale during Thursday's auction of books, other printed materials and photos from the slavery and abolition eras. The Tubman photo shows her seated on a chair and was taken in Auburn in central New York in 1868 or 1869. The auction house says the image was part of an album featuring photos of contemporary political and abolitionist figures. The album has an estimated sale price of $20,000 to $30,000. The Maryland-born Tubman led escaped slaves to freedom before and during the Civil War. She settled in Auburn after the war and is buried there.

Leonardo DiCaprio, Q-Tip bro it up at intimate showcase

NEW YORK (AP)—Longtime friends Leonardo DiCaprio and Q-Tip hung out at an intimate showcase for an Australian band making its New York City debut late Wednesday. The Oscar-winning actor and Grammy-winning rapper were in the small audience at Ludlow House as trio Chase Atlantic performed songs in a stripped, raw form. DiCaprio bobbed his head from his plush chair while sitting next to Sports Illustrated Swimsuit model Nina Agdal and chatting with the leader of A Tribe Called Quest. Q-Tip went to the stage to watch when the band asked people to come closer, as DiCaprio, in a fedora, sat back. The audience included music industry insiders, record label players and some press. Chase Atlantic performed songs from its three-song project released in January, "Part One," as well as tracks from another three-song album, "Part Two," to be released Friday. The group's genre-bending sounds echo The Weeknd and The 1975. Band members include brothers Clinton Cave and Mitchel Cave, and Christian Anthony.

Teen would rather text than talk to her crush at school

DEAR ABBY: There is a boy I like at school. He is a very well-known person around school. I'm not. I do have a wide variety of friends, and I even talk to some of his.

My friends know I like him, and they would like for me to talk to him. I wouldn't mind that, but what would I say? They want it to happen in person, but I want to do it by text, where I feel more me. What should I do?

TENNESSEE TEEN

DEAR TEEN: Listen to your friends and approach him in person. A smile and a hello should break the ice. Then follow it up with a question about some activity that's happening at school.

DEAR ABBY: Could you please address the etiquette of tasting samples at stores, events, food shows, etc.? People walk up and try to grab a sample with dirty, bleeding, scabby hands not realizing that other people will also be sampling that food.

Samples are supposed to be GIVEN to each person. And when that happens, the food handler should be wearing clean gloves and be the only person touching the food.

Please let people know that once someone without gloves touches this food, the demonstrator must discard it for health reasons. Also, samples cannot be given to children without their parents' permission, and any food allergies must be addressed before someone asks for a sample.

MARY IN FLORIDA

DEAR MARY: Your suggestions are not only good manners, they also make common sense. I hope that readers who don't know better will learn from your letter for the sake of everyone's health.

DEAR ABBY: "Enough to Share" (Dec. 5) was interested in supporting her daughter's friends through the college application process. "Enough" could mention to the family that SAT and ACT fee waivers should be available through the school counseling department if the twins are considered low-income.

Students should also know about government assistance programs, such as the Pell Grant, which can give additional money toward tuition for any low-income student. They can get more information through their schools when they fill out their FAFSA forms.

TITLE I TEACHER

DEAR TEACHER: Thank you for the pertinent information. Read on for some instructive input from another reader:

DEAR ABBY: Many schools have "Helping Hands" funds available for this purpose and would allow the family to donate to these specific girls anonymously, if need be. As an educator, I encourage everyone to reach out to a local school to offer help to struggling high school students. If they are in a position to do so, they should ask if they can sponsor a student in the college application process or sign up to mentor.

A LITTLE GOES A LONG WAY

To order "How to Write Letters for All Occasions," send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Letter Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

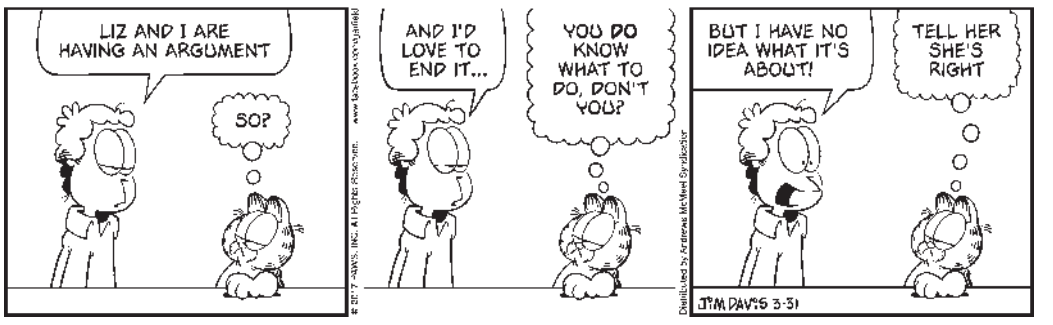
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

HERE I AM, BACK TO BEING CALVIN.
YOUR MACHINE WORKS AMAZINGLY WELL.
IT'S MY OWN DESIGN.
WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH IT NOW?
GOOD QUESTION.
...ALTHOUGH I SUPPOSE WE COULD TURN SUSIE INTO A BOWL OF CHOWDER IF WE COULD JUST GET HER IN THE MACHINE.
LEAVE ME OUT OF YOUR LIFE'S PLANS, YOU LITTLE WEIRDO.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis


LIZ AND I ARE HAVING AN ARGUMENT
SO?
AND I'D LOVE TO END IT...
YOU DO KNOW WHAT TO DO, DON'T YOU?
BUT I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT IT'S ABOUT!
TELL HER SHE'S RIGHT
JIM DAVIS 3-31

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

I THINK I SPRAINED MY NOSE.
DAD! I'M DOING IT!
I'M RUNNING MANNING!! I'VE GOT THE GROOVE!
KEEP GOING! YOU'VE GOT IT!
I MEAN, FROM WHAT I CAN SEE THROUGH MY PAIN TEARS.
WIPE 'EM AWAY! I'M A DANCING PHENOM!
3-31

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CAN I GET A SCOOP OF VANILLA?
JUST VANILLA?
WE GO THROUGH THE TROUBLE OF CREATING 31 FLAVORS SO SOME SCHLUB CAN ORDER "VANILLA"?!
AND DO YOU HAVE ANY VANILLA SPRINKLES?
HOW WOULD YOU LIKE A SCOOPER WHERE THE SUN DON'T SHINE?

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 In favor of
4 Foolproof
8 Scruff
12 Glamorous Gardner
13 Tarzan's clique
14 Last writes?
15 News-story starter
17 Ms. Rowlands
18 Author Hunter
19 Dove shelters
20 Walked nervously
22 Horseback game
24 Flair
25 Easter entrée
29 Knock
30 Barbecue site
31 Shock partner
32 Lose
34 Old portico
35 "Be quiet!"
36 Wheat variety
37 Francisco's farewell
40 Appear
41 Basil or thyme
42 Entry points
46 "Superfood" berry
47 On in years
48 Debtor's letters
49 Pear type
50 Skeletal
51 High tennis shot

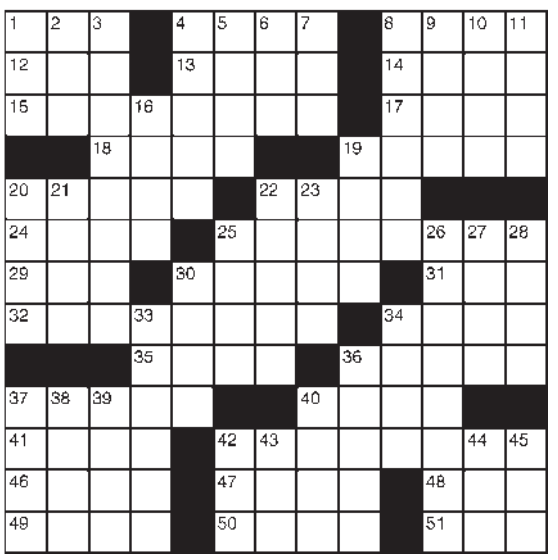
DOWN

1 Passing craze
2 Eggs
3 Limits on loans
4 Dieter's lunch
5 — arms
6 Stimpy's pal
7 Jargon suffix
8 Villainous
9 Help a hood
10 Christmas tree, often
11 Greek vowels
16 Tied
19 Nile queen, familiarly
20 Salon request
21 Jai —
22 Quilt square
23 Tom Joad, for one
25 Sheepish remarks
26 Angry letters
27 MP's quarry
28 Vegan's no-no
30 Asset
33 Irrationally afraid
34 Gush
36 Run-down
37 Melville captain
38 Erte's style
39 Nest egg choices
40 British gun
42 Prattle
43 In the past
44 "— -hoo!"
45 Long lunch?

Solution time: 27 mins.

C	R	A	B	■	T	O	P	■	A	G	R	A
H	O	M	E	■	H	E	R	■	M	A	I	N
A	V	E	C	■	A	D	E	■	A	L	O	I
R	E	N	O	W	N	■	_	I	Z	A	■	■
■	■	■	M	A	K	E	U	P	E	X	A	M
G	A	T	E	S	■	A	D	O	■	I	R	E
I	S	I	S	■	U	T	E	■	S	F	N	D
B	I	N	■	E	M	U	■	B	A	S	E	S
B	A	C	K	U	P	P	_	A	N	■	■	■
■	■	T	A	N	T	■	O	R	D	E	R	S
P	O	J	R	■	E	G	G	■	B	L	O	T
M	A	R	A	■	E	P	A	■	A	L	M	A
S	—	F	T	■	N	A	N	■	G	F	A	R

Yesterday's answer 3-31



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Jessica Szohr, 32; Ewan McGregor, 46; Christopher Walken, 74; Shirley Jones, 83.

Happy Birthday: Don't feel the need to go overboard or to live up to someone else's standards. Keep your life simple, doable and focused on what's important to you. Laying down the groundwork and showing discipline and determination will be your ticket to future success. It's never too late to revisit old ideas and make updates that suit your current situation. Your numbers are 7, 13, 22, 25, 32, 41, 47.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19)*: Take pride in whatever you do. Don't waffle or think someone else is better than you. Use your intelligence and street smarts to outmaneuver anyone who stands between you and what you want to conquer. Do what makes you happy. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20)*: Stubbornness will work against you. Ease up and get along with others in order to get things done quickly and efficiently. Stability should be your goal, not letting trivial matters dismantle your plans or hurt your reputation. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20)*: An opportunity to make alterations to your professional direction or to improve your health through fitness and nutritional changes should be recognized and put into play. A celebration with someone you love will bring you closer together. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22)*: Partnerships can make a difference to what you accomplish and how. Nurture the relationships you have with others to ensure you both get the best of everything life has to offer. Erase negativity with positive thoughts and action. ✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22)*: A playful game with someone you love will set the stage for a wonderful weekend. Turn your energy into passion and use your intelligence to attract positive attention. A commitment can and should be made. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22)*: Be careful not to offend someone who is in a position of authority. Criticism isn't the best way to get attention. Stay focused on the positives and show a willingness to pitch in and help. Actions will speak louder than words. ✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22)*: Look at the possibilities that will help you get the highest returns. Express your thoughts and feelings, look for inner strength and the possibilities to expand your creative skills and improve the way you present yourself. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21)*: Ease into difficult situations. Say little until you know exactly what's coming down the pipeline. It's up to you to monitor and control whatever comes your way if you want to come out on top. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21)*: Work-related matters should be taken care of before you depart for the weekend. Knowing that you have everything in place will ease your stress, allowing you to concentrate on personal matters, home improvements and romantic adventures. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19)*: Make personal changes that require your mental, physical and emotional input. The plan should be to improve the way you live, not to make life more difficult. Live within your means and avoid overreacting. Set reasonable standards. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18)*: Don't take the bait if someone tries to provoke an argument. Opt to do your own thing or align yourself with people who are more in tune with the way you do things. A personal change will lead to compliments. ✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20)*: Work alongside people you have worked with in the past. Finding common goals will give you a better chance to reach your goals. Put your heart and soul into bringing about the changes that will improve your lifestyle. Don't stop believing. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are brave, intense and determined. You are persuasive and resilient.

Eugenia's websites -- eugenialast.com for Ask Eugenia, daily timing and compatibility services, and join Eugenia on twitter/facebook/linkedin.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

				5				
	5		8		3		7	
		1				9		
	8		3		4		2	
6								4
	1		7		9		5	
		4				2		
	7		6		5		9	
				1				

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 3/31

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

1	7	5	6	9	3	4	2	8
4	6	2	8	5	1	7	9	3
9	3	8	7	4	2	1	6	5
7	8	3	5	1	6	9	4	2
6	2	1	9	8	4	3	5	7
5	9	4	3	2	7	8	1	6
8	4	6	1	7	5	2	3	9
3	1	9	2	6	8	5	7	4
2	5	7	4	3	9	6	8	1

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

STRIKING A POSE Solution: 10 letters

E	Z	A	G	P	R	O	P	O	R	T	I	O	N	M
I	S	W	O	H	S	S	S	E	N	I	P	P	A	H
F	N	I	H	C	T	X	E	L	F	O	K	G	T	S
L	P	L	A	Y	F	U	L	L	R	R	A	N	U	E
Ⓔ	Ⓒ	Ⓐ	Ⓕ	R	P	L	O	T	I	Z	E	R	R	S
S	D	E	X	A	L	E	R	M	I	M	P	N	A	S
N	H	Y	S	T	R	A	S	N	E	R	S	O	L	E
O	E	O	T	E	I	N	E	S	I	R	O	I	P	R
I	D	O	S	T	T	S	I	S	E	A	L	T	O	T
T	U	H	O	S	E	T	E	W	N	R	E	I	C	C
C	T	O	I	C	R	T	O	G	T	M	D	S	K	A
U	I	W	N	E	T	P	L	E	G	S	O	O	E	M
D	T	A	V	I	O	E	S	I	O	P	M	P	T	E
E	T	D	N	S	S	R	E	D	L	U	O	H	S	R
S	A	G	E	C	A	R	G	N	I	R	U	L	L	A

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Actor, Actresses, Advertisement, Alluring, Angle, Arms, Artsy, Attitude, Camera, Chin, Face, Flex, Gaze, Grace, Happiness, Lean, Legs, Magazines, Model, Mouth, Natural, Playful, Pockets, Poise, Portrait, Pose, Position, Power, Proportion, Raise, Rate, Relaxed, Seduction, Selfie, Setting, Shoulders, Show, Smile, Smirk, Stance, Surprise, Twist

Yesterday's Answer: Filed

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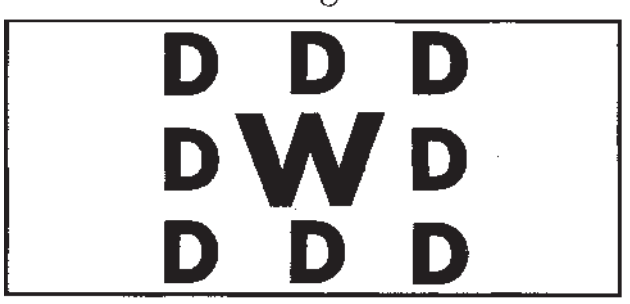

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Westbrook scores 57 in Thunder's OT win over Magic

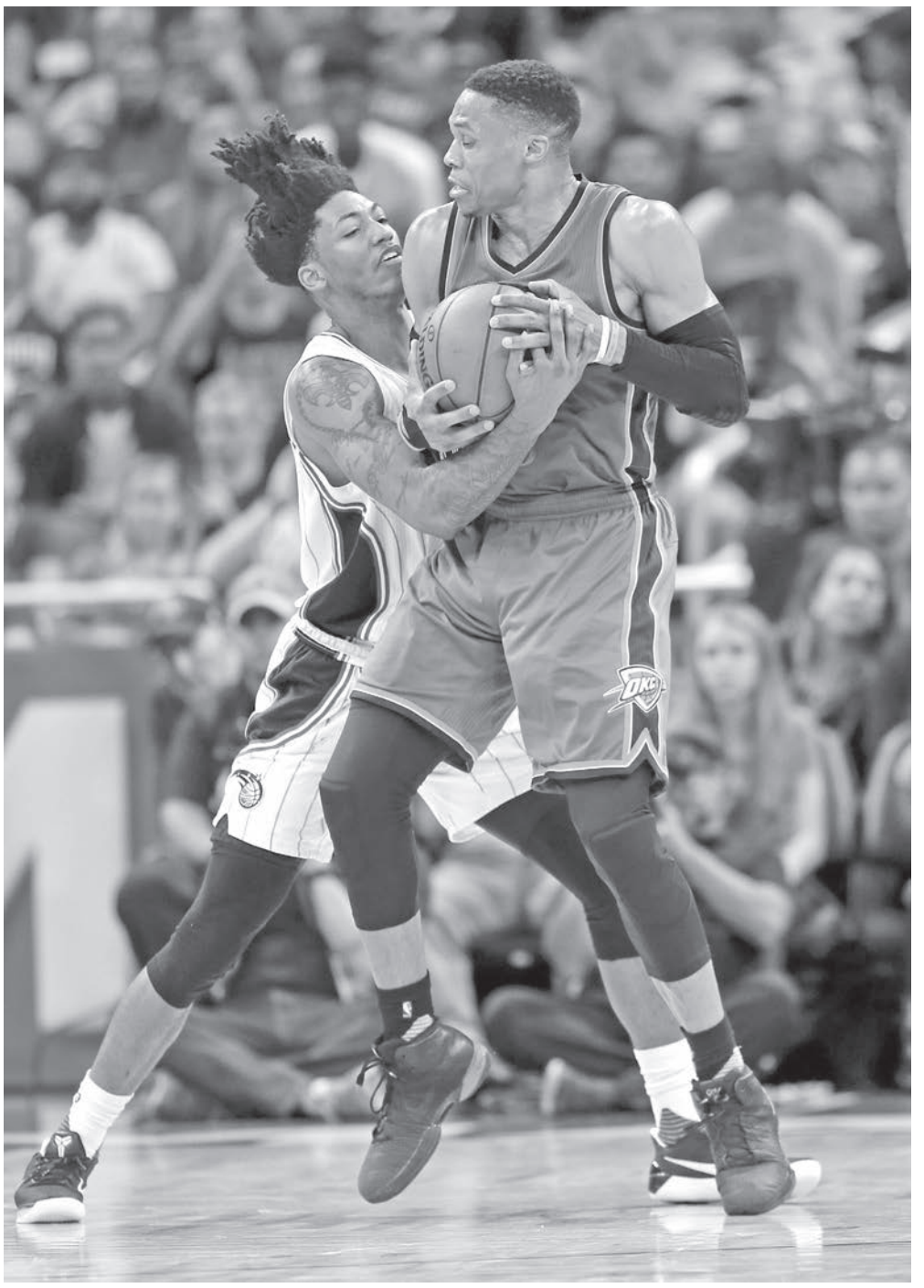
ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—Russell Westbrook had 57 points -- the most in a triple-double in NBA history -- 13 rebounds and 11 assists to lead the Oklahoma City Thunder to a 114-106 overtime win over the Orlando Magic on Wednesday night.

Westbrook, a leading MVP candidate, led the Thunder to their largest comeback in team history, rallying Oklahoma City from a 21-point deficit in the second half as he recorded his 38th triple-double of the season.

And like the 13-point outburst in the final three minutes against Dallas on Monday night for the win, Westbrook was again the catalyst as he hit big shots in the fourth quarter, including the tying 3-pointer with 7.1 seconds remaining to force the extra period.

Enes Kanter added 17 points and 10 rebounds off the bench for the Thunder, and Victor Oladipo had 13 points while returning to Amway Center for the first time since being traded by the Magic last June.

Evan Fournier finished with 24 points and Terrence Ross added 23 for the Magic.



AP

Orlando Magic's Elfrid Payton, left, tries to get the ball away form Oklahoma City Thunder's Russell Westbrook during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Wednesday, March 29, 2017, in Orlando, Fla. Oklahoma won in overtime, 114-106.

Warriors 110, Spurs 98

In San Antonio, Stephen Curry scored 29 points, Klay Thompson had 23 and the Golden State Warriors rallied from a 22-point deficit in the opening quarter to beat the San Antonio Spurs for their ninth straight win.

Golden State extended its lead over San Antonio to 3 1/2 games for the league's best record, beating the Spurs for the first time in three meetings this season.

Kawhi Leonard had 19 points and five assists for San Antonio. Leonard shot 7 for 20 from the field while being guarded by a rotation of defenders.

Bucks 103, Celtics 100

In Boston, Giannis Antetokounmpo had 22 points and nine rebounds, and the Milwaukee Bucks knocked the Boston Celtics out first place in the Eastern Conference.

Malcolm Brogdon, one of the leading contenders for NBA Rookie of the Year, finished with 16 points and nine assists. He had six key points in the final 2:46 to help Milwaukee fend off a late Boston charge.

The Bucks (39-36) have won five of six, including four straight on the road.

Heat 105, Knicks 88

In New York, Goran Dragic had 20 points, nine assists and seven rebounds, and the Miami Heat breezed past the New York Knicks.

Reserve James Johnson added 18 points for the Heat. Josh Richardson finished with 17 points as Miami (37-38) improved to 26-8 since an 11-30 start.

Kristaps Porzingis had 20 points and eight rebounds for the Knicks, who were eliminated from postseason contention for the fourth straight season since winning the Atlantic Division in 2012-13. Carmelo Anthony was scoreless in the first half and finished with nine points on 4-of-12 shooting.

Hornets 110, Raptors 106

In Toronto, Marco Belinelli scored 21 points, Kemba Walker had 19 and the Charlotte Hornets beat the Toronto Raptors.

Walker hit two big 3-pointers in the final 2 minutes, including one that gave the Hornets a 104-101 lead with 37.5 seconds left. He also had four rebounds and two assists, helping Charlotte (34-41) stop Toronto's six-game win streak.

The Hornets went 8 for 10 from 3-point range in the fourth quarter. They finished the night 16 for 32 from beyond the arc.

Hawks 99, Sixers 92

In Philadelphia, Dwight Howard had 22 points and 20 rebounds to lead the Atlanta Hawks over the Philadelphia 76ers.

The Hawks have won two straight following a seven-game losing streak that stunted their push in the Eastern Conference playoff standings. Atlanta is still in the fight for a fifth seed with Milwaukee, Indiana and Miami.

Tim Hardaway Jr. and Kent Bazemore each scored 19 points for the Hawks.

Pelicans 121, Mavericks 118

In New Orleans, Anthony Davis had 30 points and 13 rebounds, DeMarcus Cousins added 29 points and 16 rebounds in his return from a two-game absence, and the New Orleans Pelicans beat the Dallas Mavericks.

Back from a right ankle sprain, Cousins played 40 minutes. His baskets included a 29-foot 3-pointer at the end of the first half and he was 10 of 12 at the free-throw line. Davis' highlights included an offensive rebound and dunk with 1:50 left as New Orleans won for the seventh time in 10 games.

Jordan Crawford's 15-point performance included a 22-foot jumper that put the Pelicans up 121-116 with 47 seconds left.

Grizzlies 110, Pacers 97

In Memphis, Mike Conley matched his career high with seven 3-pointers on his way to 36 points, helping the Memphis Grizzlies top the Indiana Pacers.

Clippers 133, Wizards 124

In Los Angeles, J.J. Redick scored a season-high 31 points and hit seven 3-pointers, helping the Los Angeles Clippers beat the Washington Wizards. Redick returned from a sprained right ankle after missing the Clippers' collapse in a one-point loss to Sacramento last Sunday. His 3-pointers tied a season best.

Jazz 112, Kings 82

In Sacramento, Gordon Hayward scored 20 points, Rodney Hood had 18 and the Utah Jazz beat the Sacramento Kings.

Utah jumped out to an early 20-point lead, and then squandered most of it in the second quarter. But it put together a solid second half to secure its third win in four games.

Fearlessness factor: Producing in the clutch in NCAA tourney

It's the closing seconds of a tight game in the NCAA Tournament and the coach needs someone to take a big shot.

Experience helps, as does talent and preparation. There is another variable, too, that can't necessarily be quantified.

"Those kids, they're not afraid of the moment, and they really just rise to the occasion, all those clichés you want to use," North Carolina coach Roy Williams said.

Marcus Paige did it last year for North Carolina with a clutch basket late in the national title game before Villanova's Kris Jenkins knocked down a game-winner. Luke Maye joined the clutch club this year with a jumper with 0.3 seconds to beat Kentucky to get the Tar Heels back to the Final Four .

Williams drills his players through those situations in practice every day. But it's one thing for someone to hit a shot on the practice court.

Pressure is magnified under the bright lights of the NCAAs. These are situations in which intangibles may set clutch players apart.

Wisconsin pulled off a memorable victory after beating overall top seed and defending national champion Villanova in the second round on a game-winning reverse layup by Nigel Hayes with 12 seconds left. Hayes and guard Bronson Koenig were the headliners of a savvy senior class that produced in crunch time.

"And then you've got a little lucky too once in a while," coach Greg Gard said before the regional semifinals. "You've got to make shots at the right time, get a stop at the right time ... one little thing here or there tips the scales in a team's direction."

The Badgers experienced heartbreak the next game, when Chris Chiozza hit a buzzer-beating 3 in overtime on a play that started with 4 seconds left.

"But in my off night when I'm in the gym or something I might do that two or three times the whole time I'm in there, and it normally doesn't go in," Chiozza said.

A look at some memorable March moments and thoughts from coaches and players about performing in the clutch:

NORTH CAROLINA: Experience paid off for the Tar Heels. Williams runs plays in practice with a 15-second shot clock for precisely the kind of scenario that the team encountered in the regional final against the Wildcats.

"Believe it or not, we have practices where we play with a 15-second shot clock because I want them to push the ball hard enough to get a great shot in 15 seconds, not just throw it up," Williams said. "We've won a few games like that."

OREGON: The Ducks may not have had the opportunity to reach the Final Four had Tyler Dorsey not come up with key buckets down the stretch of a 75-72 win over Rhode Island in the second round. Dorsey hit a contested, go-ahead 3 from the top of the arc with 38.4 seconds after tying the game with a 3 with 1:45 left.

Dorsey, who scored 27 points, shook off two missed three throws with 3:36 left to produce late in the game.

SOUTH CAROLINA: Southeastern Conference coaches might have named Sindarius Thornwell the player of the year, but the senior has made a star turn in the NCAAs. Averaging 25.8 points in the tourney, Thornwell has helped the Gamecocks rally from three halftime deficits in their run to the Final Four.

GONZAGA: The Bulldogs played in a lot of lopsided games this season. But coach Mark Few has pointed to nonconference wins over Florida, Iowa State and Arizona, each by single digits, as effective preparation to play NCAA nail-biters. That experience paid off especially in the 61-58 win over West Virginia in the regional semifinals after Jordan Mathews hit the go-ahead 3-pointer with under a minute to play.

With Ortiz gone, fewer primary DHs left in AL

BOSTON (AP)—Big Papi was a big hitter, and that was really his only duty for most of his 20 major league seasons.

So when David Ortiz retired last year after more than 2,000 games as a designated hitter, baseball lost one of the few remaining players who rarely played the field.

Going into the 45th season since the designated hitter was approved for the American League, more managers now appear willing to spread around the DH starts instead of putting the same player in that slot just about every day.

There were 135 players who got DH starts for the 15 AL teams last season. That is an average of nine players per team, the same number that would fill an entire batting order.

"A lot of teams have gotten away from just a strict DH, and revolve it and give guys off days without really giving them off days," Kansas City Royals manager Ned Yost said.

And that may even be the case now for the Royals, whose lineup for more than a decade - including two World Series in the first half of the 1980s - featured Hal McRae , among the first players to spend most of his career as a DH. Kansas City more recently had Kendrys Morales (2015-16) and Billy Butler (2011-14) filling that role pretty much on an everyday basis.

Morales' 139 DH starts last season matched Ortiz with Boston for the most, but he left for Toronto and a big free-agent deal.

"I've enjoyed it, having Billy Butler and Kendrys Morales the last couple of years just as a DH because they were both very productive guys for our team," Yost said. "But I do see the advantage of being able to give guys half-days when the opportunity presents itself."

AP

In this Sept. 22, 2004, file photo, Boston Red Sox's David Ortiz watches the flight of his two run, home run off Baltimore Orioles starter Sidney Ponson, in the seventh inning at Fenway Park in Boston. Ortiz appeared in more than 2,000 career games as a designated hitter, but Big Papi's retirement after last season takes away one of few remaining players whose primary job is to hit.

Only five players started more than 100 games at DH last year, with some managers using that slot to keep key position players in the batting lineup while providing them an occasional day off from the field.

The DH spot also allowed slugging first baseman Albert Pujols to play 152 games for the Los Angeles Angels even while dealing with a foot issue through last season. He started 124 of those games as the designated hitter.

"At the very least he can be an everyday DH for us, and we need his bat in the lineup," Angels manager Mike Scioscia said this spring. "You don't want to risk what he does in the batter's box to get him to play first base a certain amount of games."

The 37-year-old Pujols, who still has five seasons left on his contract, would prefer to be in the field when possible. He has played 1,704 career games at first base, and only 339 as a DH.

"I'd rather play. I don't like (DH) much, but you have to get used to it," Pujols said. "The last couple of years, I got used to it."

Victor Martinez, a 38-year-old former catcher, started 138 games as Detroit's DH last season. Nelson Cruz was Seattle's starting DH for 107 games, and in right field for 48 other games.

"You see a lot of teams that just kind of use the rotating DH and use it as a time to get guys a day off," Mariners manager Scott Servais said. "The way (Cruz) does it, and goes about it, works great for us. We have an investment in Nelson and we certainly need him out there as many days as possible."

During the first season of the DH in 1973, when there were only 12 AL teams, eight used the same DH for more than 100 games, according to baseball-reference.com. A ninth team had the same DH for just more than half of the 162-game season.

Last year, nine of 15 teams used the same DH for more than half of the time. Tampa Bay used a league-high 16 players in that slot, and the White Sox 15. No surprise Boston and Kansas City needed only four players in the DH role.

Among the 10 Yankees DHs was Alex Rodriguez, who got a team-high 57 starts at that spot before retiring last August at age 41.

While Ortiz spent most of his career as a DH, and Edgar Martinez played two-thirds of his games over 18 seasons with Seattle (1987-2004) in that role, other players weren't solely hitters until late in their careers.

Hank Aaron returned to Milwaukee and served as the DH for the then-still AL Brewers for his last two MLB seasons (1975-76) before retiring at age 42. Dave Kingman, another slugger, was Oakland's DH his last three seasons (1984-86).

Saints bring back tight end Phillips

METAIRIE, La. (AP)—The New Orleans Saints are bringing back tight end John Phillips on a one-year contract.

Phillips joined the Saints during Week 10 of last season, when he was claimed off of waivers from the Denver Broncos.

The 6-foot-5, 251-pound Phillips started four of eight games last season with New Orleans, catching five passes for 32 yards. Including his time with Denver, Phillip played in 16 games last season and caught 10 passes, including one touchdown.

Now heading into his ninth pro campaign out of Virginia, Phillips has appeared in 111 games with Dallas, San Diego, Denver and New Orleans. He has 39 career starts and also has played on special teams.

The contract was announced by Saints general manager Mickey Loomis on Wednesday.

In New York, the Buffalo Bills have waived defensive lineman Scott Crichton for failing his physical.

The move was announced on Wednesday, two days since the Bills claimed Crichton after he had been placed on waivers by the Minnesota Vikings.

Crichton was Minnesota's third-round pick in the 2014 draft, but played sparingly in 21 games during his first two seasons with the Vikings. He missed all of last season because of an injury.

Crichton was a three-year starter at Oregon State, where he had 23+ sacks and 10 forced fumbles.

Meanwhile, the NFL Referees Association has added four new members who will start work this season.

Association president Tony Steratore announced Wednesday the additions of Mike Carr, Ryan Dickson, David Oliver and Brad Rogers.

All four took part in the NFL's Officiating Development Program. Oliver and Rogers last officiated games in the Southeastern Conference, while Carr worked in the Big Ten and Dickson in the Pac-12.

"It's a long, tough road to become an NFL official," said Scott Green, NFLRA's executive director. "We congratulate these four outstanding individuals on their selection and welcome them to the union."

The new officials will help fill in with the recent retirements of head linesman John McGrath, line judge Tony Veteri, Jr., and field judge Bob Waggoner.

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Venus upsets top-ranked Kerber to advance at Miami Open

MIAMI (AP)—Venus Williams moved a step closer to her first Key Biscayne title since 2001 when she beat top-ranked Angelique Kerber, 7-5, 6-3, Wednesday night in the quarterfinals of the Miami Open.

It was Williams' 15th career win against a No. 1 player, but her first since 2014. Seeded No. 11, she's into the tournament's semifinals for the first time in seven years.

Williams' opponent Thursday night will be No. 10-seeded Johanna Konta, who became the first British woman to reach a semifinal in the tournament by beating No. 3 Simona Halep, 3-6, 7-6 (7), 6-2. No. 2 Karolina Pliskova will play No. 12 Caroline Wozniacki in the other semifinal.

Williams took charge of her quarterfinal match when Kerber double-faulted on the final two points of the opening set, and broke serve twice more early in the second set. She closed out the victory on her fifth match point with a backhand winner.

It was a matchup of offense against defense, with Williams the more aggressive player, charging the net often. Kerber stayed rooted to the baseline and was on the defensive even when she served, facing 13 break points and losing serve five times.

The German will remain No. 1 next week despite her loss. She reclaimed the top ranking this month after Indian Wells, replacing Serena Williams, who is sidelined by a knee injury.

Venus Williams improved to 61-13 at Key Biscayne, where she is making her 18th appearance. She won the title in 1998, 1999 and 2001 and considers the tournament her hometown event — she lives 90 minutes north in Palm Beach Gardens.

AP

Venus Williams of the United States tries to return a shot against Angelique Kerber of Germany during a quarterfinal match at the Miami Open tennis tournament, Wednesday, March 29, 2017, in Key Biscayne, Fla. Williams defeated Kerber, 7-5, 6-3.

At 36, Williams was the oldest woman to enter the draw, but she hasn't been taxed physically while winning every set in her four matches.

On the men's side, Fabio Fognini became the first unseeded player in 10 years to reach the men's semifinals at Key Biscayne when he beat 2016 runner-up Kei Nishikori, 6-4, 6-2. Fognini, 29, who matched his best showing in an ATP Masters 1000 event, will next play the winner of Wednesday night's match between Rafael Nadal and Jack Sock.

Nishikori was seeded No. 2. Fognini improved to 9-44 against top-10 players, and became the first Italian man to reach a semifinal at Key Biscayne.

Scott looking to hone his game ahead of the Masters

HUMBLE, Texas (AP)— Adam Scott is back at the Shell Houston Open for the first time in seven years with a change in strategy for the majors.

He wants to make sure his game is up to speed for the Masters.

And that goes for his caddie, too.

Scott has two caddies who are in a job-sharing program, and while Steve Williams usually works at the majors, Scott felt it was important for Williams not to go to Augusta National without having seen him play.

He also has been commuting from Australia, where his wife is pregnant with their second child.

"That almost made this become very easy for me to put on the schedule and change things up," Scott said. "Part of my plan for the rest of the year is to play the week before the majors and doing something a little different than I have the past few years."

He faces what has become one of the stronger fields of the year at the Golf Club of Houston, which tries to present a test that will get players ready for the Masters. Nothing compared with Augusta National, though the greens are faster and rough has been shaved to create tightly mown collection areas.

Tournament officials can't do much about the weather, however, especially with a storm moving through Wednesday to soften the greens.

"I don't think they'll have a problem with the speed of the greens any day," Scott said. "Obviously, they're just going to get softer, receive shots, and that's probably going to affect the scoring a little bit because the ball won't take that first firm bounce. I expect scoring to be pretty good at least for the first couple of days."

No one will have to worry about Dustin Johnson this week, either.

Johnson, coming off a victory in the Dell Technologies Match Play in which he won seven matches over five days, cited fatigue in pulling out of the tournament. The Houston Open still includes Scott, British Open champion Henrik Stenson, Jordan Spieth, Rickie Fowler, Justin Rose and Phil Mickelson.

All of them have cited a desire to get into competitive mode ahead of the Masters.

Scott won the Houston Open in 2007 and last played it in 2010.

The Masters is on the mind of many players who aren't even in the first major of the year. Only 29 players already are in the Masters. This is the last chance to qualify, with the winner getting an invitation. A year ago, Jim Herman held off Stenson for a one-shot victory to earn his first trip to the Masters.

Stenson has finished one shot out of the lead twice in the last four years. Stenson, Scott, Fowler and Rose each skipped the Match Play because they were at the Arnold Palmer Invitational two weeks ago, wanted to play a week before the Masters and didn't want to overdo it.

"I like to play the week before a major if I can," said Stenson, who played the Scottish Open last summer a week before his record performance at Royal Troon. "Sets me up better, puts me in game mode, and instead of coming straight from practice, I tend to analyze a little bit too much at times, I guess. I like to play, and this is a good course for it."

MPU

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ly minutes of the second half, courtesy of Villagomez's shot in the 40th. Kim and Basnet drilled their goals in the 52nd and 62nd minute, respectively.

In the Paire-Matansa tiff, Kaden Church knocked in all four goals for the former to force the draw.

Paire used to stare a 0-3 deficit at the break after John Edward Fabia, Justin Charles Achas, and Razeff Altamirano scored for Matansa in the ninth, 20th, and 36th minute. Church then ended Paire's drought in the 37th minute, but Matansa got the one run back off Elijah Villamero's shot three minutes later. However, Matansa bungled the lead, while Church came to Paire's rescue with his last two goals in a span of three minutes (65th and 68th)

Meanwhile, in the boys U17 category, MP United and TanHoldings were still neck-and-neck in the battle for the division crown.

MP United kept the top spot with its 6-0-0 mark following a 4-1 triumph over Paire last weekend at the Hopwood Junior High School Field. TanHoldings is not far behind as it improved to 5-0-1 slate after shutting down Kanoa, 3-0.

Three different players scored for TanHoldings with Anthony Fruit lighting up the board first in the 50th minute and John Paul Cruz and Mark Esalan following suit in the 57th and 71st, respectively.

MP United, on the other hand, drew a pair of goals from Sunjoon Tenorio and one apiece from Skyler Poon and Joshua Abragan. Poon scored in the 39th minute for MP United's lone goal in the first half, while Tenorio had back-to-back shots in the 45th and 60th before Abragan closed out for the team in the 62nd. Jonah Pohl nailed the lone goal for Paire in the 47th minute.

TANHOLDINGS

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Without Rueda, Andy Mortos single-handedly carried Best Deal/RNV as he scored a game-high 41 points. However, that proved to be not enough against the young guns of Mariana Resort, who drew double figures from seven players, while only Rey Alfonso backed up Mortos with his 13 markers.

Prince Factor led Mariana Resort's well-oiled offense with his 27 markers, Mel Sakisat chipped in 19, and Frank Lifoifoi and Carlo Prado contributed 17 and 14, respectively. Jun Fidelino, Arthur James, and J.R. Lifoifoi chipped in 13 each for Mariana Resort, which played no let up on offense, peppering the hapless with 13 triples. Mariana Resort was so unforgiving that it finished off Best Deal/RNV by knocking three straight treys in the closing minutes of the match.

In the other semis game, TanHoldings also established a double-digit lead early, 26-14, and never looked back, as it finally ended McDonald's hopes for a finals appearance. McDonalds, before falling short in its finals bid, booted out two higher-seeded foes to make it to the Final Four.

Douglas Schmidt drilled 9 points in the first quarter to put TanHoldings on top by 12, while the rest of his teammates made their contributions in the succeeding periods to oust McDonalds.

Schmidt finished with a game-high 19 markers, while Bart Demapan added 16, and Elmer Esdrelon and R.J. Nonato registered 14 and 12, respectively. McClain Achas had 16 to pace McDonald's, which was held to no more than 19 points in the first three periods to fall behind all throughout the match.

Meanwhile, Game 1 of the best-of-three title series between TanHoldings and Mariana Resort will be played tonight.

First Game

Mariana Resort 141— Factor 27, Sakisat 19, F. Lifoifoi 17, Prado 14, Fidelino 13, James 13, J.Lifoifoi 13, Kani 8, Kitani 5, Ermitanio 4.

Best Deal/RNV 71 — Mortos 41, Alfonso 13, Cayanan 7, Nabal 5, Doseo 5, Barrios 2.

Scoring by quarters: 31-16, 70-41, 100-56, 141-71.

Second Game

TanHoldings 96 — Schmidt 19, Demapan 16, Esdrelon 14, Nonato 12, Matsutaro 9, Duenas 9, Quizon 3, Villamena 2.

McDonald's 67 — Mc. Achas 16, Gaspar 15, Gapor 11, Mi. Achas 8, Macaranas 6, C. Achas 6, Ladra 2, J. Achas 2.

Scoring by quarters: 26-

JINNOSUKE

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16-lap event, beating brother Lennosuke (9:56.61), fellow SSC swimmers Jin Ju Thompson (11:33.80), and Taiga Sato (10:27.64), and Palau's Osisang Chilton (10:51.77), and Klei Andreas (12:17.80).

Then in the 400m freestyle event, the younger Suzuki submitted 4:46.50 to surpass the 4:52.68 that Kimura made on Feb. 6, 2009. Suzuki's time was ranked No. 5 among the 21 swimmers who completed the eight-lap swim and he was second in his age group behind 14-year-old and Palau bet Keane (4:33.82).

Enforcers, Braves prevail in Junior League; Falcons soar

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The Enforcers and Braves won their respective games in the Jenior League division of the 2017 Saipan Little League Baseball last Saturday at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

The Enforcers played in the curtain-raiser and triumphed in a high-scoring game against Bank of Saipan, 17-10.

Terrence Babauta lifted the Enforcers to victory as his grand slam at the top of the fourth inning allowed the Enforcers to overhaul a 1-6 deficit and grab the lead, 9-6. The Enforcers made eight runs in the pivotal inning, three more off earned ones and one from a passed ball. Babauta's grand slam came after he flied out to center field in his first at bat.

After taking the lead, the Enforcers hung on, as they also scored in the last three innings, while holding Bank of Saipan to two and scoreless in the sixth and seventh. The Enforcers forced Bank of Saipan to 1-2-3 innings in the last two frames and closer Sean Rabauliman gave up only one hit and struck out three in that shutdown.

The pitcher also scored three runs, while catcher Tom Agulto made four and was 3-for-5 at bat and tallied one RBI. Justin Agulto, Jonathan Santos, Donovan Guerrero, and Minko Taimanao contributed two runs each.

Joven Reyes had four runs on a losing cause for Bank of Saipan and he went 2-for-4 at the plate, while Devon Pangelinan was 3-for-4, but had no runs.

In the other Junior League match, the Braves topped the Falcons, 8-4.

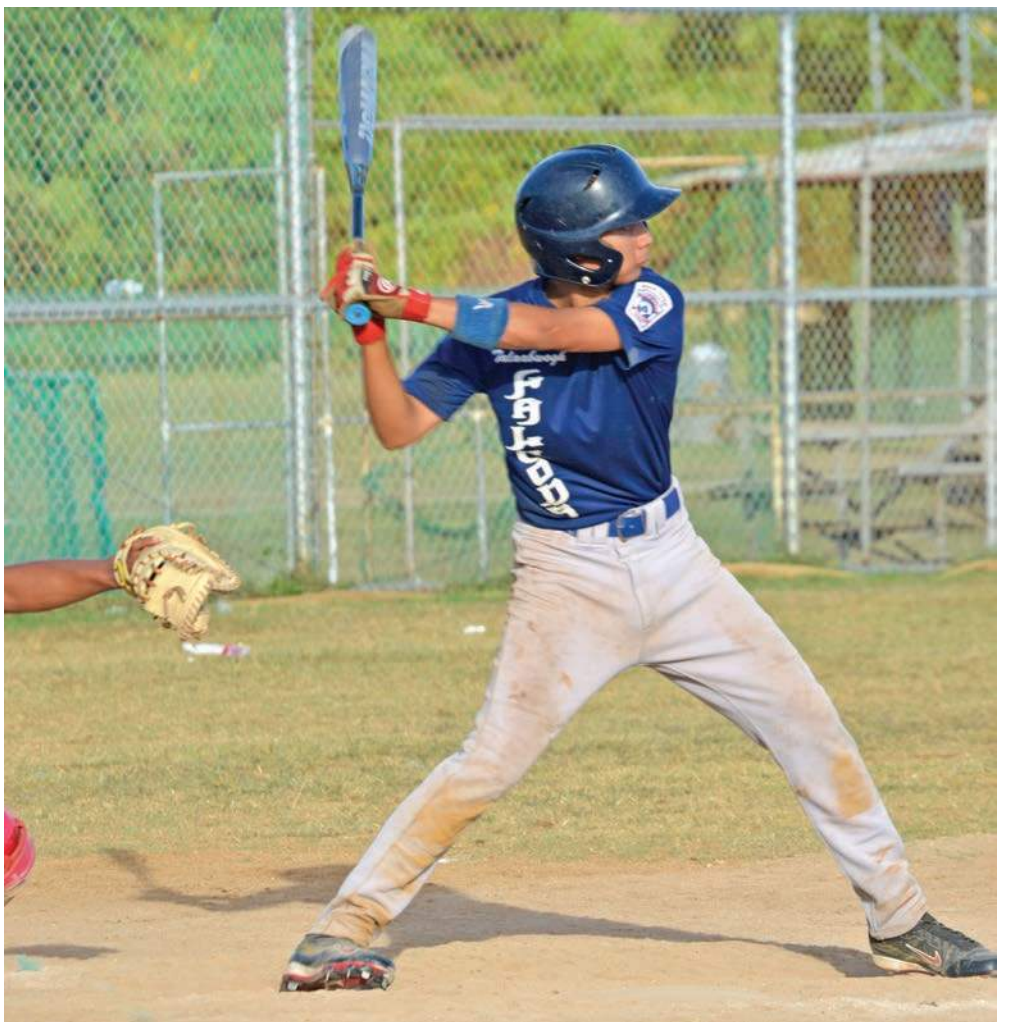
The Braves combined for seven runs in the fourth and fifth inning to bounce back after trailing by 3, 1-4, in the first three innings.

The Braves got four runs off two wild pitches and the Falcons' errors at shortstop at the bottom of the fourth, while the former's three runs in the fifth were earned ones as they took the driver's seat, 8-4, and never relinquished it.

The Falcons failed to regain the upper hand as they were silent in the last four innings after a four-run top of the third. JP Celis grounded the Falcons, as he took over the mound at the start of the fourth inning and yielded only two hits and fanned out five batters. Celis, who relieved V.J. Igitol, forced the Falcons to 1-2-3 innings in the fourth and sixth and then stranded a runner at third base in the final inning when he got the last strikeout.

Meanwhile, the Falcons won the lone Senior League game last Saturday after outclassing the Blue Jays, 7-2.

The Falcons, after going scoreless in the first three innings, found their target in the last four to beat the Blue Jays, who made it to the board only twice (first and seventh innings. The Falcons capitalized on the Blue Jays errors after recording five of their runs off the latter's defensive miscues.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO
The Falcons' Tindin Deleon Guerrero waits for the pitch during the top of the sixth inning of their game against the Blue Jays in the Senior League division of the 2017 Saipan Little League Baseball last Saturday at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

LOCAL SCORES

Saipan Little League Baseball
MAJORS DIVISION

Batting Leaders
(Based on 12 or more times at bat as of March 19, 2017)

	AB	HITS	AVG
1. Lushawn Reyes (McDonalds)	23	14	.608
2. Delbert Sablan (Little Legals)	16	9	.562
3. Joel Deleon Guerrero (McDonalds)	22	12	.545
4. Isidro Lizama (Bank of Saipan)	16	8	.500
5. Anton Aguon (Bank of Saipan)	18	9	.500
6. Jason Reyes (Comets)	12	6	.500
7. Gunner Sablan (Little Legals)	14	7	.500
8. Joel Borja (Braves)	12	6	.500
9 . Benjamin Palcios (Bank of Saipan)	13	6	.461
10. Jon Reyes (Bank of Saipan)	13	6	.461
11. Tristant Norrita (Braves)	13	6	.461
12. Keoni Serrano (Falcons)	18	8	.444
13. Kaipo Dikito (Little Legals)	16	7	.437
14. Patrick Celis (Braves)	14	6	.428
15. Jequinn Lizama (Bank of Saipan)	17	7	.418
16. RJ Muna (Comets)	12	5	.416
17. Joe Ada (McDonalds)	20	8	.400
18. Johnathan Riungel (Falcons)	18	7	.388
19. Taisel Desebel (Braves)	14	5	.357
20. Anthony Acosta (McDonalds)	26	9	.346

Doubles
Joe Ada –5

Triples
Gunner Sablan-3
Kazu Dela Cruz-2
Ohane Borja-2

RBI
Isidro Lizama-9
Delbert Sablan-9
Joe Ada-8

Strikeouts
Acosta Anthony-39 • Jason Reyes-31
Keoni Serrano-37 • Isidro Lizama-29

Pitching Leaders
(Based on 12 or more innings pitched)

	INN	ER	ERA
Isidro Lizama(Bank of Saipan)	15	1	0.40
Jason Reyes(Comets)	13	1	0.46
Keoni Serrano (Falcons)	19.1	3	0.90
Gregorio Pangelinan (Pirates 2)	12	3	1.50
Anton Aguon(Bank of Saipan)	12	3	1.50

JUNIOR LEAGUE
Batting Leaders

	AB	Hits	AVG
1. JP Celis (Braves)	12	6	.500
2. Vicente Camacho (Braves)	14	7	.500
3. Tom Agulto (Enforcers)	17	8	.770
4. Froilan Camacho (FALCONS)	14	6	.428
5. Kianna Aldan (OLACES)	12	5.	416
6. Trevon Leito(Olaces)	13	6	.416
7. Leveque Iguel (Braves)	12	5	.416
8. Zeph Limes(Comets)	12	5	.416
9. Sab Saures (Comets)	15	6	.400
10. AJ Sanchez (comets)	15	6	.400
11. Justin Agulto(Enforcers)	13	5	.384
12. Joel Norita (Falcons)	13	5	.384
13. Francisco Kumuch (Falcons)	14	5	.357
14. Reid Teregeyo (Comets)	15	5	.333
15. Johnathan Santos (Enforcers)	12	4	.333

Doubles
Sab Saures-3
Vicente Camacho-2
Kianna Aldan-2

RBI
AJ Sanchez –5
Froilan Camacho-5

Home Run
Froilan Camacho-1

Runs
Aven Evangelista-11
Joel Norita-8
Froilan Camacho-8

Strikeouts
JP Celis-21 Sab Saures-19
Joel Norita-20 Bing Nakamura-17
Sean Rabauliman-16

Pitching Leaders
(Based on 13 or more innings pitched)

	INN	ER	ERA		INN	ER	ERA
JP Celis	13	1	0.51	Bing Nakamura	13	3	1.61
Joel Norita	16	2	0.87	Sean Rabauliman	14	4	2.00

SENIOR LEAGUE
Batting Leaders

	AB	HIT	AVG		AB	HIT	AVG
Tyrese Camacho(Enforcers)	21	10	.476	Jode Reyes(Enforcers	16	5	.312
Henry Aguon (Falcons)	12	5	.416	Noel Cabrera(Falcons)	13	4	.307
Pedro Maratita (Enforcers)	15	6	.400	Ace Evangelista(Falcons)	17	5	.294
Spencer Dickinson(Falcons)	13	5	.384	Shakobe Rangamar (Enforcers)	21	6	.285
Kobe Lifoifoi(FALCONS)	18	6	.333	Leo Salalila(Enforcers)	18	5	.277
Trion Sulap(Blue Jays)	12	4	.333	Kimo Angoilen	18	5	.277
Larson Sabitang(Enforcers)	15	5	.333	Tindin Guerrero	17	4	.235
Jose Camacho(Enforcers)	19	6	.315				

Doubles
Sho Taguchi-3
Shakobe Rangamar-2

RBI
Kobe Lifoifoi-7
Shakobe Rangamar-6

Triples
Shakobe Rangamar-1

Home Run
Kimo Angailen-1

Runs
Tyrese Camacho-8
Spencer Dickinson-7

Strikeouts
Tyrese Camacho-30
Shakobe Rangamar-26
Jester Kintaro-24

Pitching Leaders

	INN	ER	ERA		INN	ER	ERA
Tyrese Camacho	18	1	0.38	Jester Kintaro	16	3	1.31
Sho Taguchi	13	2	1.07	Shakobe Rangamar	21	4	1.33

T8 Warriors, Ol'Aces down Knights

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The Ol'Aces and T8 Warriors defeated the Knights in their separate games in the 2017 Francisco M. Diaz Memorial Youth League last Wednesday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

In the girls division, the Ol'Aces topped the Lady Knights, 32-19, while in the boys U18 category, the T8 Warriors edged the Knights, 54-46.

Chevy Kate Alipio led the Ol'Aces with her 10 points and she drew enough help from her teammates en route to their double-digit winning margin. Simrani Surima, Cherville Espinosa, Jumia Alegre, and Annalei Santos added 4 points apiece, while two more Ol'Aces players hit the board.

Only four players scored for the Lady Knights with Karleen Reyes making 9 and Guinevere Borja contributing 6. Jennifer Villagomez and Tawnie Manibusan were the other scorers for the Lady Knights.

In the second game, the T8 Warriors also won their debut, thanks to their balance scoring.

Ten T8 Warriors made it to the team's box score and six drilled at least two field goals apiece. Henry Aguon led all scorers with his 13 markers, while Rawhoo Sulap chipped in 12. Don Fejeran, Travis Kapileo, Kaikuni Kainoa, and Ace Evangelista combined for 22 more points for the T8 Warriors.

The T8 Warriors were just ahead by four midway in the second half, 38-34, when they forced a couple of errors and converted them into fastbreak plays to up their lead to double-digits, 48-38. The Knights tried to rally in the homestretch, but three straight baskets from Sulap denied the former's bid.

Tony Deloen Guerrero had 12 points on a losing effort for the Knights.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
T8 Warriors' Henry Aguon takes off for a layup during the second half of their boys U18 division game against the Knights in the Diaz youth caging last Wednesday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Girls Division

Ol'Aces 32 — Alipio 10, S. Surima 6, Espinosa 4, Alegre 4, Santos 4, Phan 2, Camacho 2.

Lady Knights 19 — Reyes 9, Borja 6, J. Villagomez 3, Manibusan 1.

Boys U18 Division

T8 Warriors 54 — H. Aguon 13, R. Sulap 12, Fejeran 8, Kapileo 6, Kainoa 4, Evangelista 4, Garte 2, J. Aguon 2, T. Sulap 2, Boadi 2.

Knights 46 — Deleon Guerrero 12, Gamab 9, Kim 9, Yun 8, Cepeda 2, Masga 2.

Westbrook scores 57 in Thunder's OT win over Magic

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Sports

With Ortiz gone, fewer primary DHs left in AL

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Jinnosuke crushes 4 age group records

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Saipan Swim Club's Jinnosuke Suzuki shattered four records in the boys 11 to 12 age groups during the 2017 SSC International Meet held last week at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool.

Suzuki started his string of record swims in the annual tournament last March 23 after clocking in at 19:04.79 in the 1, 500m freestyle event. His time was more than a minute faster than his previous personal best of 20:19:02 and over 38 seconds ahead of the old age group mark (19:43.27) that Tsunami Saipan's Kensuke Kimura registered on July 19, 2008. The 11-year-old Suzuki posted the third best time among the nine swimmers who braved the longest race in the competition. His teammate Kento Akimaru tallied the fastest time at 17:79.95, while Palau's Noel Keane came in at second after logging 18:05.51.

Besides the record in the 1,500m freestyle, Suzuki eclipsed two more age group marks that Kimura established and one from another Tsunami Saipan swimmer—Ryuto Yanai.

Yanai's record fell last March 23, as Suzuki registered 2:45.87 in the 200m butterfly. Yanai's mark of 2:52.50 was posted on May 2, 2015.

After his two record-breaking swims in Day 1 of the meet, Suzuki returned to the pool last Friday and timed in at 9:45.51 in the 800m freestyle to crush the eight-year-old record of Kimura. The SSC swimmers defeated Kimura's mark set on April 3, 2009 by nearly 20 seconds. Suzuki was the first finisher in the

See JINNOSUKE on Page 34

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Saipan Swim Club's Jinnosuke Suzuki swims in the 800m freestyle event in the 2017 SSC International Meet held last week at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool.

TanHoldings vs Mariana Resort in finals

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The stage has been set for the title showdown between TanHoldings and Mariana Resort as they eased their way to the finals of the JEM Company Ltd./Mobil Customer Appreciation Basketball League.

Mariana Resort booked the first finals ticket after pounding Best Deal/RNV Construction last Wednesday, 141-71, while TanHoldings also coasted past McDonald, 96-67, to arrange the championship duel of the two undefeated teams in the league.

Both Mariana Resort and TanHoldings got off to a good start, giving their respective opponents little chances to pull off an upset against the Top 2 seeds in the playoffs.

Marianas Resort dropped 31 points just in the first quarter to take a double-digit lead, 31-16, and kept going in the last three periods, showing no mercy against the depleted crew of Best Deal/RNV. Best Deal/RNV played without some of its key players, led by Ronald Rueda, who scored 34 points in his last game this season as he left the island four days before they dueled Mariana Resort in the semis.

See TANHOLDINGS on Page 34

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Mariana Resort's J.R. Lifoifoi, left, is fouled by Best Deal/RNV Construction's Rudy Barrios during the third quarter of their semis game in the JEM/Mobil caging last Wednesday night at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

MPU gains cushion; Matansa draws Paire

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

MP United Football Club got more breathing room in the boys U14 division of the 2017 NMIFA Youth Spring League after beating Shirley's FC, 3-1, last Saturday at the Koblerville Elementary School Field.

MP United now has a 5-2-0 win-draw-loss record for a 5-point lead against TanHoldings (3-3-1), which went through a scoreless draw against Kanoa FC (1-2-3). Paire FC (0-2-4) and Matansa (2-3-2) also settled for a draw, 4-4, in the final division match last weekend.

Jon Villagomez, Dylan Kim, and Rohan Basnet scored for MP United, while Romel Mendoza gave Shirley's (3-0-4) its lone goal in the game. Mendoza's shot came early, as he found the back of the net in the fourth minute, giving Shirley's the shaky lead after the first half. MP United, after being silent in the first 35 minutes of play, finally made it to the board right in the ear-

See MPU on Page 34

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
The Paire goalie catches the ball, while a Matansa player attempts for a kick during their boys U14 division game in the NMIFA youth league last Saturday at the Koblerville Elementary School Field.